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Created by the editor using a portrait image from iStockphoto and our own studio shot of the Sony RX1 Carl Zeiss 35mm f2 lens

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The story of an ARPS monochrome documentary project and a successful local community exhibition



©Martin Argyroglo/Divergence-Images

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Our selection from your submitted images, all of which receive a £30 voucher from One Vision Imaging

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Three magazines to choose from – so why not get 'em all?

DIARY

Until February 27th 2015

Light Works – International Year of Light exhibition (RPS)
Belfast City Hall, Northern Ireland
Science Festival
www.rps.org/IYL2015

February 26th-March 5th 2015

WPPI Convention
MGM Grand, Las Vegas, Nevada
www.wppionline.com/wppi-show.shtml

March 2nd-April 17th 2015

Light Works – International Year of Light exhibition (RPS)
Edinburgh International Science Festival, St Andrew's Square
www.rps.org/IYL2015

March 8th 2015

The London Photograph Fair
Bloomsbury Holiday Inn, Coram Street, London WC1N 1HT
11am-4pm, admission: £5
www.photofair.co.uk

March 13th-April 12th 2015

FORMAT Photofestival 2015
Derby – events, portfolio assessments, exhibitions
www.formatfestival.co.uk

March 20th-Sept 13th 2015

Revelations: Experiments in Photography
Exhibition at the Science Museum Media Space, London
www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

March 21st-24th 2015

The Photography Show
NEC Birmingham
www.photographyshow.com

April 5th 2015

Easter Sunday

April 17th-June 7th 2015

Deutsche Börse Photog. Prize 2015
Photographers' Gallery, London
thephotographersgallery.org.uk

April 21st 2015

Photovision Roadshow
Royal Highland Showground
Edinburgh, Scotland
www.forwardevents.co.uk

Two more nails in the coffin of print – but f2's still going strong

A year ago, I took the spot decision to recover f2 *Freelance Photographer* from EC1 Publishing Ltd after almost seven years under their ownership. In 2007, Simon James persuaded me not to cease publication as he remembered the history of the magazine from its start in 1989 as *PHOTOpro*. In 2014 I found myself reversing the move.

In retrospect it's easy to see why this is a decision of the heart not the head, as the market for printed magazines has been declining for a long time – circulations and revenues of familiar and famous titles in all fields have been submerged by the daily flush of overflowing blogs. Photography has not escaped that effect even though it works better in print than any other medium.

f2, bucking the trend, has increased circulation in the last year without needing any extra promotion or advertising, without the staff and resources of a large publishing house to back it. We felt that if a magazine was to be worth buying, it should be well-printed on high quality stock with a simple classic design – more like a book. We were right.

What we did not expect to see was the apparent closure, at the end of 2014, of two of the UK's monthly photographic magazines. Archant Specialist division stopped printing issues of *Professional Photographer* and *Photography Monthly* on December 31st, though the titles may survive in the digital world.

Professional Photography is a real loss. For decades



– going back to the original ICP, *Industrial & Commercial Photographer*, of the 1960s – it was the independent monthly for working photographers, bridging the gap between the consumer press and pro-only closed circulation publications like *Master Photography* (MPA), *The Photographer* (BIPP) and *Image* (AoP). *Image* is now digital only, *The Photographer* is an A5 quarterly, and our own production *Master* thrives as a full f2-size and quality bi-monthly alongside the SWPP's doorstep volumes of *Professional Image Maker*.

The barriers facing any specialist magazine now are huge – postal costs are rising more than once a year, international postage has become almost prohibitive with single copies of this issue costing £7.25 in franked printed paper rate post to Australia (as I write – and more after March 30th).

We are almost the last man standing now – there's one other 'floppy' left occupying the monthly slot it previously shared with *Professional Photographer*.

Whatever the future brings, we'll maintain the standards we have (hopefully) set with our first six upgraded editions of f2 and keep faith with our growing readership – and our image-conscious, in all senses, advertisers.

– David Kilpatrick

Dis-montage throws Twitter out of the saddle



As Photoshop fakery goes, Ginni Beard's ejector-seat eventer is a classic because it's almost real. When she tweeted the picture in January, it went viral and most of the world believed it, though she admitted very early on that this was a montage. "There are two photos taken about a minute apart", she explains. "When the unseated rider followed his horse over the fence he shouted to me to get a shot of him as well, and put him back on! I made up the photo just for a joke. He has no rocket attached!". And it works, of course, because each shows the same scene and the rider really DID jump the fence. Thanks to Ginni, equestrian event specialist in the South East, for taking us all for a ride! www.ginni beard.com

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At the heart of the image



DIARY

Continued

April 24th-May 10th 2015

Sony World Photography Awards
Somerset House, London
Entry by ticket only
www.worldphoto.org

May 7th 2015

UK General Election

May 12th 2015

Photovision Roadshow
Wigan, DW Stadium
www.forwardevents.co.uk

May 14th-16th 2015

London Photo Festival
www.londonphotofestival.org

June 10th 2015

Photovision Roadshow
Royal Windsor Racecourse
www.forwardevents.co.uk

July 4th-Sept. 20th 2015

Les Rencontres d'Arles
Arles, France
www.rencontres-arles.com

August 29th-Sept. 13th 2015

Visa pour l'Image
Perpignan
www.visapourlimage.com

October 18th 2015

Master Photography Awards 2015
Hinckley Island Hotel,
Leicestershire
www.mpaawards.co.uk

ADOBE BUYS ON-LINE PICTURE LIBRARY FOTOLIA

ADOBE is to acquire privately-held Fotolia, a leading marketplace for royalty-free photos, images, graphics and HD video, for approximately \$800 million in cash. Fotolia will be integrated into Adobe Creative Cloud, providing Creative Cloud members with the ability to access and purchase over 34 million images and videos, simplifying and accelerating the design process.

Following the completion of the acquisition, Adobe expects to integrate the delivery and purchase of stock assets into Creative Cloud. Adobe also plans to continue to operate Fotolia as a standalone stock service, accessible to anyone.

Founded in 2004, with offices in New York, Paris and Berlin, privately-held Fotolia operates in 23 countries and has websites in 14 languages. Fotolia CEO, Oleg Tscheltzoff, will continue to lead the Fotolia team as part of Adobe's Digital Media business.

REX ACQUIRED BY SHUTTERSTOCK

ONE of the most important independent picture libraries and active syndication agencies for freelancers, Rex Features, is to be taken over by Shutterstock.

"Shutterstock's much broader customer base will allow us to deliver content to a whole new business segment", said a Rexperson.

"The acquisition of Rex Features marks our substantive entry into editorial imagery – a new market", said Shutterstock, one of the original commercial microstock sellers.

The combined companies plan to bring a "comprehensive offering to market across both editorial and commercial content." The Rex 'brand' is to remain intact.

www.rexfeatures.com

AADUKI FIRST TO OFFER DRONE INSURANCE

AADUKI MULTIMEDIA has confirmed that it now offers cover for photographers or video makers who are using **unmanned aerial systems** to work. Nik Stewart, Director of Marketing & Business Development at Aaduki Multimedia said, "as far as I am aware, Aaduki is the only specialist UK photography and video insurance provider able to offer cover for the use of drones."

See our special feature in this issue – Sky High, Page 50.

Vince Brown the Operations Manager said, "Our policies cover the use of unmanned aerial vehicles all risk, in flight or in transit plus we can extend the cover to include Public Liability, Employers Liability and any cameras you choose to hang off them! We can also extend cover to outside of the UK if required. All our policies comply with CAA regulation as well as EC 785-2004, the EU regulation governing the use of these drones. We are also the recognised insurance provider for SUAS – the Society for Unmanned Aerial Systems."

www.aaduki.com



PERMAJET AMBASSADOR

VICKI-LEA BOULTER, whose profile and portfolio along with cover appeared in the last edition of f2 Freelance Photographer, has been appointed an official Permajet Ambassador. Vicki-Lea met with Permajet on the day we were going to press – congratulations to a great talent!



PROAM PHOTO & STORY BOOKS

PROAM IMAGING has launched a range of 'highly competitive' photo/story books particularly suited to weddings thanks to the 'lay-flat' style and faux leather covers – or full photo cover for just £1 extra.

Press printed lay-flat premium photobooks are on heavyweight 216gsm premium silk paper, producing a continuous flow of photographs over a double page spread with minimal central image loss. Sizes run from 8-inch square to A4 portrait or landscape.

Alternatively there are photo printed lay-flat VIP seamless storybooks – again with a leather effect hard cover. These are produced on Fuji DP2 lustre paper, giving each leaf a combined thickness of 440gsm. Images run across lay-flat spreads with no visual break in the spine. Sizes run from 8-inch square to A3 landscape.

Stop Press: **30% off launch offer code** when pro and freelance clients place their first order, email sales@proamimaging.com and mention f2 Freelance Photographer to get your checkout code.

www.proamimaging.com

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Focal length: 329mm Exposure: F/5.6 1/160 sec ISO400 © Ian Plant

Focal length: 600mm Exposure: F/9 1/100 sec ISO800 © Ian Plant



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*The Sony lens is designated as "SP 150-600mm F/5-6.3 Di USD".

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f2 Freelance Photographer will be on Stand A92... we hope you'll be there too!

21-24 MARCH 2015
THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM

The Photography Show returns to the NEC, Birmingham, for the second year since it took over the mantle of Focus on Imaging. It's pushed back the date even further – what was once a February show is now late March, when travel should be more reliable and the days are brighter for those wanting to buy the latest lens and get outside to check the results.

Billed as the largest UK event of its kind, it clocked up over 30,000 unique attendees (BPA audited) in 2014. The split was 12,367 pro/trade and 17,636 enthusiasts – not the expected three to one domination by the parka and backpack crowd.

Returning to the NEC from Saturday to Tuesday, March 21st to 24th, it is now located in Hall 5, the NEC's largest hall – for a better visitor experience, more space, more places to eat, and closer to the rail station. A Food Gallery has been added within the hall (there will be an image gallery in this area for visitors to enjoy). Aisles have been widened and a surprising 84 new exhibitors added to the 200-plus line-up.

These include notable absences from last year **Leica**, **Sony** and **Pentax** (Ricoh Imaging). **Timelinc** (formerly IPC Media) and the **Association of Photographers** have become partners for 2015.

The show will see the return of the **Super Stage** with a new line-up featuring Martin Parr, Don McCullin, Mary Ellen Walker, Susan Meiselas, Tim Flach, Tom Stoddart, Michael Kenna, Simon Norfolk, Lynsey Addario and Don McCullin.

Pro focus

The organisers have planned plenty of education and networking opportunities for professional and trade visitors. The focus is on both the business and art of professional photography:

Professional Conference – a half-day conference on Monday and Tuesday for professional photographers focusing on the business of photography and how to enhance your creativity. (additional ticket required).

Pro Happy Hour – for the last hour of the show on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd there will be a networking hour for professional photographers, a perfect



opportunity to share ideas and challenges.

Pro Networking Drinks – on Monday 23rd from 5pm to 8pm a selection of top ten professionals will be delivering their top ten tips for their peers in a series of informal, fast paced presentations. This will be preceded and followed by networking drinks.

Build Your Creative Team – being a photographer is not just about taking amazing pictures. You also need to be able to style a shoot which includes finding the right model, makeup artist and hair stylist. This can be a daunting and frustrating process. That's why the **Master Photographers Association** (MPA) are bringing you a networking event like no other. This session is perfect if you want to meet and network with a range of models and stylists – the beauty of it is they're all in one place! This takes place in the **Bowens Lounge** on Monday 23rd from 4pm to 5pm. The Bowens Lounge is exclusively for pro photographers and members of the imaging trade. Pro visitors can access the lounge with their show badge, taking a break from the busy show floor, catch up on some work or have meetings with friends and colleagues. Pro visitors also receive a free coffee voucher when they get their show badge in the post.

And more – to see what's on for pros, visit photographyshow.com.

Universal appeal

For all visitors, pro or enthusiast, the programme is really packed with demos and education:

On the **Live Stage** top photographers demonstrate how to tackle a diverse range of shoots, from unique challenging subjects

Live demonstrations and photo shoots pulled the crowds in 2014



to portrait, wedding and fashion.

Streetscape is a brand new open stage on the show floor with graffiti in an 'urban street setting'. Pro photographers will talk visitors through how to get the best out of their street photography.

IGPOTY Garden – as last year, there is a real garden on the show floor hosted by International Garden Photographer of the Year (IGPOTY) for visitors keen to practise macro and plant photography.

Behind the Lens – a seminar style theatre features professional photographers covering a diverse selection of genres and techniques.

Lomography Konstruktor Workshops – popular in 2014, this is a workshop where visitors can build their own analogue camera from scratch (additional ticket required, as you get to keep your finished camera).

Lomography Diana F+ Workshop – a workshop where visitors can test out a range of lenses and the instant print capabilities of the very hip Diana F+ camera.

Adobe Theatre will be where

Photoshop and Lightroom experts talk visitors through the essential skills needed to successfully edit photos.

For those entering the field of movies and especially the new world of 4K, there is a **Filmmaker Theatre** dedicated to film-making, giving visitors hints and tips on how to get the best out of the video function on their cameras.

Mobileography will be an open area on the show floor designed to demonstrate the ability of smartphones to create great photos.

DIY Framing & Mounting Workshops – this was another very popular practical training workshop last year. You can learn how to mount and frame your own pictures, with tips and advice on hand from the UK School of Framing (additional ticket required)

30 Under 30 is an exciting competition that identifies 30 emerging photographers aged between 18 and 30 internationally, recognising and providing a platform for burgeoning photographic talent. A gallery area will display the winning projects.



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The Photography Show

21-24 MARCH 2015
THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM

Time your visit to catch the Live Stage – FREE

Saturday March 21st

11.30-12.00hrs

One Flash, Two Flash, Three Flash, Four

Explore different light setups and how power settings can change the mood of an image. With John Denton, Contemporary Portrait Photographer.

12.30-13.00hrs

The Art of Wedding Photography Lighting

Join world-leading wedding photographer Jeff Ascough as he discusses light sources and the relationship between light and your subject.

15.30-16.00hrs

From Ordinary to Extraordinary

Join Faye and Trevor Yerbury as they take you on a journey of how to create the extraordinary from the ordinary.

16.30-17.00hrs

Become a Better Photographer in 3 Shots

Take your photography up a level in just 3 shots! With Mark Cleghorn, Portrait & Wedding Photographer.

Sunday March 22nd

11.30-12.00hrs

The Secrets of Food Photography Revealed

Discover how to use your camera to get incredible food shots and techniques you need to create mouthwatering images. With William Reavell, Food Photographer and Teacher.

12.30-13.00hrs

Shoot and Tell for Amazing Wedding Portraits

Take your wedding portraits to new levels and discover how to make your imagery stand out from the crowd. With Steve Howdle, Fashion Photographer.

14.30-15.00hrs

An Improvised Shoot with the Naked Photographer

This improvised shoot will demonstrate what can be achieved when you push your creativity to the limits. Adam Bronkhorst, Portrait, Wedding & Commercial Photographer.

15:30 - 16:00

The Art of Wedding Photography Lighting

Join world-leading wedding photographer Jeff Ascough as he discusses light sources and the relationship between light and your subject.

16.30-17.00hrs

Advanced One Light Set Ups

Explore the different techniques associated with a one light set up. Wayne Johns, Fashion, Beauty, Portrait & Advertising Photographer.

Monday March 23rd

11.30-12.00hrs

The Beauty of the Imperfection

Discover techniques for shooting creative portraits. Bert Stephani, Creative Portrait Photographer.

12.30-13.00hrs

Mastering your Photographic Skills

Paul Wilkinson, portrait photographer, shares his story and expert advice on how to take your photography to the pinnacle of photographic success.

14.30-15.00hrs

Advanced One Light Set Ups (see above)

Explore the different techniques associated with a one light set up. Wayne Johns, Fashion, Beauty, Portrait & Advertising Photographer.

15:30 - 16:00

The Descendants: a Historical Portrait Project

Explore Drew's fascinating project of recreated portraits of historical figures using their descendants and discover the techniques used to achieve amazing results. Drew Gardner, Photographer & Filmmaker.

16.30-17.00hrs

The Art of Wedding Photography Lighting (see above)



Look for this poster at The Photography Show. It is not just an informative lighting guide from The Flash Centre, it includes special offers from Aspire Photographic Training and Mark Cleghorn's The Photographer Academy. The reverse side is the best shot (we think) of the portrait subject 22 x 30" size.

Tuesday March 24th

11.30-12.00hrs

Going Beyond the Bland

Explore professional styling and lighting and how it can create extraordinary results. Mark Cleghorn, Portrait & Wedding Photographer.

12.30-13.00hrs

The Art of Wedding Photography Lighting (see above)

14.30-15.00hrs

The Beauty of the Imperfection (see above)

15:30 - 16:00

The Art of Pregnancy and Newborn Photography

Explore the business of newborns with Tobias Robins, Newborn Photographer.

The Live Stage is completely free to enjoy. It's recommended you arrive 15 minutes early due to the popularity of these sessions. Seats are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Information given here is correct at the time of going to press, E&OE.

The speakers are brought to you by The Societies, Canon, MPA, The Photographer Academy, The Photography Farm, Leica, Fujifilm, and Manfrotto.

The Photography Show app is available to download from

Apple Store:

<http://bit.ly/1CKlxzs>

Google Play Store:

<http://bit.ly/1v0kagc>

or via the app page:

<http://bit.ly/1L2LezT>

Tickets are currently available on sale, with **free entry for professionals** see the advertisement on the facing page. Find out more details at www.photographyshow.com on booking details.

The Photography Show

21-24 MARCH 2015
THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM

Images courtesy of:



*The event that puts
you in the picture*



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- See photography icons on the Super Stage
- Get top business advice at the Professional Photographers Conference
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PENTAX 645Z

Richard Kilpatrick tries out the full-framer which may be a perfect compromise in specifications, performance, size, weight and cost for many existing and new Nikon users

Good things come to those who wait, as the saying goes. Throughout the history of technology, sooner or later the unimaginable becomes possible, the unbelievable becomes reality and the unattainable becomes affordable. Two things push this tidal wave along; technology, and ubiquity; smartphones existed for almost a decade before the iPhone, but by appealing to the mass market the iPhone ensured everyone wanted a smartphone. Similarly, Kodak's DCS range provided an expensive and somewhat crude – by modern standards – solution for digital photographers looking for an SLR. 15 years after the first mainstream DSLRs came out, they're affordable, incredibly versatile and user friendly, and people are looking for the next big thing.

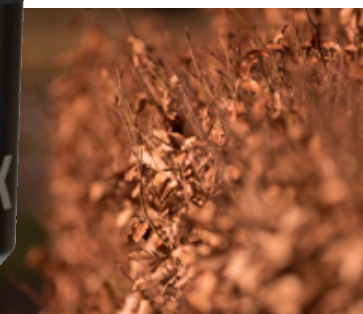
Well, the next big thing is here. And boy, is it big. 51.4Mp of 44mm x 33mm sensor in a substantial housing. Sounds familiar? Yep, here it comes – the high five figure pricetag, the unfamiliar workflow, the expensive accessories.

Not this time. Pentax's successor to the 645D, the 645Z, has launched, and it isn't so much a successor as a "tear it up and start again" approach to 2010's warning shot to the medium-format establishment. The worldwide market for medium format digital in 2010 was in very low numbers – some sources suggested as few as 5,000 new systems worldwide per year, though the market for upgrades and refurbished kit was buoyant. The cameras and backs have to be expensive to ensure the firms can exist, right?

Despite Pentax's clear investment in new lens technology suggesting a long-term plan, a body specification that genuinely improved upon the specifications of other medium format systems was ignored. The idea of multi-point fast AF, relatively high FPS and other consumer niceties was expected to wither and die off in the face of brand loyalty. Besides, the 645D capture was softer than a comparable Phase One or Hasselblad back; despite using the same sensor, it appeared they'd done something to make it less sharp, a different approach to the lo-pass filter or processing.



The Pentax 645Z with 55mm f2.8 standard lens – £7,699 value



The 300mm f4 has impressively close focusing and a potential for strong differential focus in portraits or close-up work.



Above: the 645Z shares many features with 35mm-derived Pentax bodies, and accepts the same shoe mounted GPS unit.



Right – the card door reveals twin SD slots, and there's a large tripod plate and bush on the left hand side of the camera as well as on the base. Below, the 645Z placed directly beside a Nikon D4 shows its compact size.



Sony sensor advance

Almost a year ago a ground-breaking medium format CMOS sensor made an appearance. Fabricated by Sony, the 44 x 33mm 51.4Mp module has a pixel pitch similar to the D800 and Sony A7R.

Remember Sony and Hasselblad working together? Curiously when the new sensor made it to market, both Phase One and Hasselblad claimed to be first with a 50Mp CMOS chip. The H5D-50C now costs £22,440 or £23,634 with optional WiFi; the Phase One IQ250 with 645DF+ body is "around £25,000" but deals may be available; none of the UK retailers checked publishes a price. The Phase One 645DF+ body alone is officially over £4,000 without a back.

As you would expect from a modern professional body, the Pentax sensor lacks an AA filter, relying on high resolution to minimise the risk of false-colour moiré patterns. An AA filter simulator can be enabled for tricky subjects.

So the Pentax, which offers superior AF performance with 27 AF points, a fully integrated weather sealed body, twin SDXC card slots, an articulated screen and an impressive 3 frames per second continuous drive, is going to be priced comparably, right? After all, the medium format market is small, and the 51.4Mp CMOS sensor is the same used in all three cameras.

Wrong. Pentax have launched – *launched*, not even 'reduced price after launch' as with the 645D – the 645Z at an astonishing £6,799 inc. VAT. The lightweight 55mm f2.8 lens takes it to £7,699. Thanks to the machinations of pricing and history the 645Z is not the cheapest MF digital ever, but it is absolutely the cheapest MF digital ever launched with cutting-edge sensor technology. As a fully integrated DSLR, this is that moment where the unattainable technology hits a price and format that any UK professional photographer should be able to justify, particularly with 0% finance deals, competitive leasing and hopefully continued support for the Annual Investment Allowance.



The Wordsworth Room of Kilworth House Hotel (www.kilworthhouse.co.uk, used for my test shots, with thanks) photographed using the Pentax 28-45mm zoom at 28mm, 1 second at f11, ISO 800. Full size 300dpi section from the file, below.



As any social/wedding photographer who has tried to go from Nikon/Canon DSLR to previous Medium Format digitals will know, there has long been a price to pay beyond the cash. AF accuracy, speed, handling, weight – all take their toll. If you tried to do it on a tight budget you would be steered to elderly tech refurbished models. Pentax have torn up that established pattern comprehensively, and here's how they did it.

First, the 645Z body is an evolution of the 645D, itself one of the most successful medium-format DSLRs produced (the Leica S2 falls between camps with a 45 x 30mm sensor, and the Mamiya ZD SLR was a commercial flop). In Japan the 645D gained a foothold as a premium enthusiast camera as much as it is a commercial tool. A distinctive quirk of the Pentax design is a choice of tripod mounts on the side and the base for portrait or landscape orientation, and that remains on the 645Z.

An obvious major change is that the 645Z has an articulated, high-quality LCD display that allows overhead or waist-level shooting with exceptional real-time live view. Less obvious is a completely new mirror and shutter assembly, which completely transforms the sound and experience. The responsive mechanism sounds discreet and precise, subdued by the large body. It's not whisper quiet, nor does it have an electronic first curtain mode, but for a medium format body it is one of the most refined. Where smaller bodies may seek to replicate the click of a well adjusted lock, the 645Z has the air of a loom's flying shuttle. Rumours suggest that leaf-shutter lenses have been explored, which combined with the mirror lock-up live view could further reduce noise.

Like previous Pentax 645 systems the 645Z has a flange focal distance of 70.87mm, which makes it essentially impossible to adapt other 645 system lenses; Pentax's own range is extensive and relatively speaking, affordable. Unusually – uniquely, to the best of my research – Pentax is the only manufacturer offering medium-format lenses with optical image stabilisation, and most recent designs also incorporate weather sealing as indicated by a red ring on the barrel and red rubber gasket on the mount.

Coming to the Pentax from full-frame 35mm systems, the handling is not far off the largest bodies with grip – the eye point is a very comfortable 21mm with 98% coverage and interchangeable screens, effectively underlining

The articulated screen was used for this staircase angle with 25mm lens –

just needs a bride...



Bedroom photographed using the 25mm lens, ISO 100, 4 seconds at f11. Distortion correction can be applied in-camera (menu screen, below) but this discontinued lens is very low distortion and the results above is from raw.



the benefits of a larger format viewfinder. Controls are liberally scattered around the body and the majority are very intuitive, though some functions (such as moving the AF point) require a two-stage operation.

Such extensive shooting modes are something that medium-

format users won't be familiar with. Scene modes, in-camera filters, all here alongside custom setting memory and the Pentax TAv priority mode that allows Auto ISO to be used rather than a fixed setting – a real benefit when switching from indoor to outdoor shooting under pressure. A 13EV

dynamic range that holds up into ISO 3200-6400 territory is a clear advantage over the typical DSLR, and this goes hand in hand with greater detail for prints, better options for cropping.

There's very little to criticise on the 645Z, even when coming from the perspective of full-frame DSLR usage. It has HD video, including 1080p/60. It has all the features that make a consumer body user friendly, yet it retains all of the benefits of medium format quality. The lens range is good; older lenses work well on it and for buyers looking for action and outdoor practicality the 25mm, 55mm and 90mm add weather resistance to faster AF.

With my first quick look over a highly in-demand system we couldn't keep for long, there simply was no time needed for familiarity. You can put down your regular SLR and dive straight into the 645Z regardless of workflow. Live view and screen compositions? Tethered shooting? Fast, camera-to-eye and have faith in the autofocus? Everything aside from very high speed bursts is handled. And the 3fps might not sound much to a world used to D4 and 1D performance, but in the medium format world it doubles the rate possible.

2014 was a year of disruptive technology, but a year ago few would have predicted Pentax making such an aggressive move to the high-end professional market. Their top end K-series APS-C DSLRs have often represented exceptional quality, flexibility and value for money appreciated by enthusiasts yet have been overlooked by British professionals.

The 645Z is a 50 foot tall neon sign saying "look at me!" for any professional photographer to notice – the aspirational and real qualities of medium format with the handling, comfort and almost all the speed of a current DSLR, no caveats required. Whether you're looking to differentiate your images through greater control and quality or simply want to differentiate yourself from the 35mm masses as full-frame 35mm becomes a consumer format, Pentax have created an opportunity that you would be insane to dismiss purely for the brand.

This is the best medium format camera you can buy, and you should buy, because Pentax have priced it at a level that makes it *cheaper than the depreciation* on other high-end MF backs and systems.

www.pentaxwebstore.com
www.ricoh-imaging.com



Photograph © John Baikie ABIPP ASWPP LMPA printed on Fujicolor Crystal Archive by One Vision Imaging

“Colour, sharpness and saturation is all spot on, and results are incredibly consistent. That’s exactly what I need and, in my opinion, silver halide is still by far the best print technology around.”

– John Baikie

Fujicolor Crystal Archive Digital Pearl is a paper with fine visual acutance and full saturation, praised by photographers for whiter than white highlights, vibrant colour and superb shadow detail. Developed for use with all mini labs and medium to large-scale printer systems, Crystal Archive Digital Pearl is a silver halide paper containing pearl mica pigments and metal oxides which combine to give purer whites and sharper, better-defined highlights. Optimised for digital systems, the paper has a thicker base and higher stiffness for a high-quality look and feel.

With superb archival permanence, images printed on Crystal Archive Digital Pearl will look as fresh in the future as the day they were taken. Portrait and wedding photographers will find the paper ideally suited for albums and display prints and will marvel at the high level of detail and colour achieved. This is a paper which defies the ageing process. Your clients will love you for it.

Other papers in the Fujifilm Professional Paper Range

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For more information on the full range or to request a sample print please call Peter Wigington on 01234 572138, or email: photoimaging@fuji.co.uk or visit www.fujifilm.eu/uk/products/photofinishing/photographic-paper/



C-type prints from your Instagram images? Certainly, sir...

This is the most photographed age ever. Did you know that Justin Bieber has over twenty million followers on Instagram, the online photo-sharing service? Twenty million.

Kim Kardashian (she's billed as an American social media personality) languishes in the Canadian singer's slipstream with a mere eighteen million.

But despite the myriads of images now captured every minute of every day worldwide, some say the digital photo-industry picture isn't so rosy. A growing band of imaging pundits lament that photography itself is losing/ has lost, some of its allure. It's perhaps not quite so special anymore?

A while back even Adobe ran a discussion group asking the question: *Is digital all tech and no talent?*

So, is a knowledge of aperture, exposure and light settings still an art form to be cherished – or are auto-settings, quick fixes and 'total Photoshop' the only future?

Time for a rewind?

There's a recently launched app called *Zencam* – described by its makers as a 'mindful disposable camera.' It features digital rolls of film. Pictures captured on this 'film', on which users have just twenty 'exposure' opportunities, can't be seen until they're developed – you know, just like the good old days.

The idea is to get photographers – who these days are so used to capturing limitless numbers of shots digitally – to slow down and think a lot more about what they are taking.

But whether digital or analogue at the point of capture, the imaging industry is still proving that evolution can be a hybrid model.



'Fujifilm Crystal Archive is our most popular product line. Photographers love it' – Steve Macleod, creative director, Metro Imaging

Back in the glory days of film prolabs like East London-based **Metro Imaging** were processing 8,000-10,000 rolls every 24 hours – and needed a 300-strong staff to cope.

Today a workforce of just 30 experts – highly-trained operators and printers, enable this highly innovative and adaptive 35 year old imaging ship to cruise comfortably in the merged waters of both digital and analogue. And today Metro is a truly global brand.

Says Metro Imaging creative director Steve Macleod: "Just over a decade ago, when everyone went wholesale digital, businesses like ours had to adjust. There seemed to be less need for a photographic lab because fewer prints were being made."

"The bottom just dropped out of the commercial, advertising and editorial market – but we have

evolved and adapted. We have ended up with a smaller business but it's much more global. Our staff understands technology in terms of file transfers, email, social media – all imperative elements of our business today. The majority were formerly analogue printers but now they are Photoshop printers. They have exactly the same sensibility and mindset but now collaboration is the default position. Now we work more in conjunction with photographers as a service-based enterprise. It's very much a two-way sharing of ideas."

"We used to be so Londo-centric. You'd drop off a bag of film, get your clip test, hang around to pick up your film, get your contacts done – then off you skipped to your picture editor. Labs then were very physical entities. These days we are just as likely to be installing a photo-exhibition in Beijing or New York.

We work with many international photographers who need high quality prints for UK shows and galleries – but most of them will never even come to the lab front door. Our blossoming **MetroPrint** online option means our customers can access all the services available under the Metro Imaging prolab banner – but facilitated wherever you happen to be in the world.

So you could have a 10ft by 6ft Lightjet print by going online with MetroPrint – at exactly the same quality levels as if you walked through our front door with a file. It's Metro Imaging – but from your own office – and available 24/7 across the globe."

Metro has a long history of working with A-List shooters – but now the demographic has widened.

Steve explains: "We don't believe knowledge should be exclusive, we are advisors and mentors – we've been running our own mentoring programme for the past nine years. We inform people about scanning and film processing and the different types of print media – and we demonstrate what the effect will be of mounting something in a particular way. And we do this for professionals and amateurs alike.

Analogue versus digital – a 'do or die' scenario?

Says Steve: "I believe there is continuing room for both. I don't think one will kill the other – it's now a marriage of convenience between the two. We are working now with a demographic that is much less formal photography based. Photography is seen differently and not restricted by what you see through a camera – thanks to digital. Today we are just as likely to be working with a sculptor who uses photography, as we are with a fine art shooter.

This is why we embrace direct media now – using slate, wood, glass etc to present photography in new ways – and of course 3D printing is already here."

He adds: "But we are seeing a huge willingness for people to make print and explore new avenues. **Fujifilm Crystal Archive** is our most popular product line. Photographers love it.

"The matte version is our No 1 standard stock paper – from Instagram to exhibition printing you will find Fujifilm silver halide papers on our **Lambda** or **Lightjet** printers on any given day. And we are one of very few outlets who do real photographic prints from Instagram – we have our own app. Recently we had a gang of Instagrammers in to discuss





how they could best convert their images to print as C-Types."

"These people just shoot on iPhone or Android – but they might have hundreds of thousands of followers. They might be dentists or architects or entrepreneurs – they just love shooting on their smartphones and printing on quality photographic paper."

Metro research shows that their photographer customers love Fujifilm Crystal Archive because it has a legacy. It has continuity.

Notes Steve: "They simply depend on it – and they know there will never be any deviation in quality from batch to batch. Additionally, its amazing archival quality is very important. Many of our clients are printing exhibition quality works that target museums, exhibitions, and private and public collections – so they need guaranteed consistency and stability. Crystal Archive is the backstop – it has the industry name and weight behind it."

London-based photographer Dan Holdsworth exhibits his work internationally and is world-acclaimed for his stunning

For more information on the Fujifilm professional paper range or to request a sample print call Peter Wigington on 01234 572138, or email: photoimaging@fuji.co.uk



Photograph of Dan at work courtesy of Audemars Piguet

'Fujifilm C-Type papers render very beautifully a powerful material sense of light and colour and as such are a component that I choose to make integral to my image production' – Dan Holdsworth

'otherworldly' imagery – exploiting eerie lighting effects, as in *Hyperborea 06* (featured on this page) a C-Type 152 x 122cm showing The Northern Lights, shot in Iceland.

Says Dan: "Fujifilm C-Type papers render very beautifully a powerful material sense of light

and colour and as such are a component that I choose to make integral to my image production."

Silver halide papers are big business at Metro – but the lab is more concerned about supply than demand. Says Steve, who has a Master's degree in photography and chemistry theory: "Of course

we have concerns about future supply – the global cost of the commodities involved, silver and gelatin. Whenever you make a commodity of a base material it will fluctuate with the markets – but we are delighted that Fujifilm are still backing silver halide papers 100%.

"It was great to see them at photokina coming forward and announcing plans for new silver halide solutions. It's a process that has been in the darkroom since the Year Dot and what we have done as a business is bring it out of the darkroom and merge it into the digital age. These are papers photographers can relate to.

"There will come a point where dry technologies will become cheaper than silver halide but we are not there yet. We are taking this provenance material and using it for contemporary methods of working. As long as it remains so will we."



www.metroimaging.co.uk
www.danholdsworth.com
 Video interview with Dan created by Audemars Piguet:
<http://youtu.be/zxujTMcwebo>

MAKING HISTORY

Parisian professional photographer Martin Argyroglo, assistant to Marc Riboud for six years and an exhibited architectural specialist, found himself shooting reportage to file with the co-operative Divergence-Images as crowds gathered in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo murders. His iconic image defined the new spirit of France.

At the top of the human pyramid seen all round the world in the media and on web pages on January 11th is the half-shadowed figure of La Republique, or Liberty, the French equivalent to Britannia. She overlooks the Place de la Nation in Paris, where hundreds gathered to demonstrate their sorrow and resolve in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo murders and supermarket hostage taking.

The Triumph of the Republic is the name of the statue and was also the title dubbed on this image by *L'Obs* (observer) magazine for their midweek magazine cover three days later.

The publication then created a web page, with an erudite analysis and history of the shot written by Cyril Bonnet, which draws in the comparisons being made between this image and the heroic documentary paintings of past French artists:

<http://bit.ly/1DEdIU9>

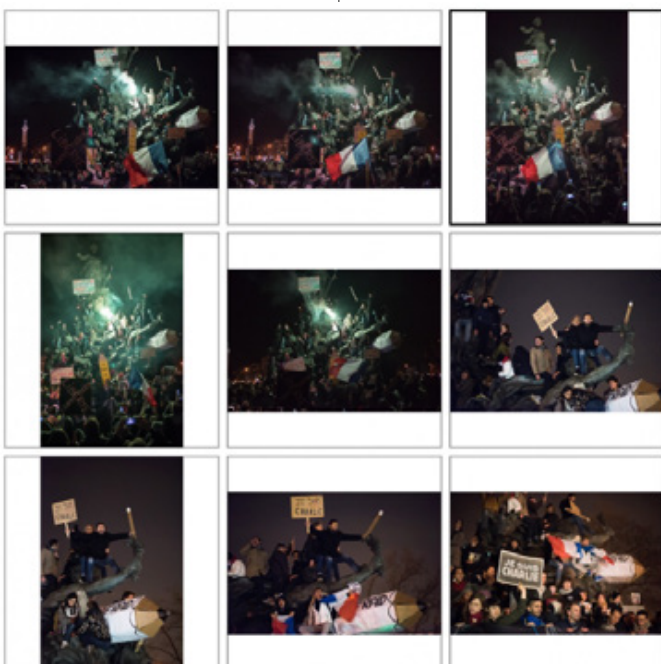
Some bloggers and commenters called it *The Pencil Leading the People*, to echo the title of the Eugène Delacroix painting *Liberty Leading the People*. Argyroglo captioned or titled his photograph "Nation" because of the location.

Martin Argyroglo is a young architectural and documentary photographer who was lucky enough – or good enough – to be assistant to the great visual reporter Marc Riboud from 2005 to 2011 while and after attending the École des Beaux Arts, a post-graduate course which already marked him out as one of the best in his generation.

Martin records newsworthy events when able to, and is a member of the co-operative on line picture library Divergence-Images. With about three quarters of a million images on line, this freelance news and topical outlet does not compete with Getty, Alamy or Shutterstock but allows its photographers to negotiate directly with clients for uses of the image. This is, therefore, a rare example of a picture in f2 being licensed for use – had this been a Getty image, we could never have afforded the fee, or obtained the high resolution image as we did



Above: Delacroix's 'Liberty Leading the People'. The website for French topical magazine *L'Obs* includes an excellent analysis of Martin's photograph along with references to great paintings, and the 'contact sheet' of images taken. Use the QR code to go straight to this page or enter the shortened URL (left hand column) to read the story (in French).



directly from the photographer. He was able to learn about our magazine and accept our offered repro fee knowing that we were not dealing with large budgets or a huge circulation. This strikes us as an honest type of photo agency in the best French tradition.

There are many images from this solidarity rally from many photographers, and those during the daylight hours are generally ordinary. Martin found a shooting position in the crowds at around 8pm of the Place de la Nation. The protesters came to show their support for freedom of expression and the spirit of France, so in addition to the symbolic pencils and the placards with the "Je Suis Charlie" slogan, there was a tricolour flag and one man wearing a clown's red nose. The dress of the mostly young protesters was the drab winter wear you'll find in every European city, making the splashes of red white and blue stand out. With minimal street lighting, the illumination in the images comes from lights, mobile phones and flares held by the crowd.

With the benefit of the formal art training of the École and the photojournalism of Riboud to draw on, Argyroglo did what Henri Cartier-Bresson used to do – he found a composition, and waited to time the moment when all the elements within his frame combined for visual impact.

"First I composed horizontal pictures, cutting out the statue", he said. "The result was not satisfactory. I then opted for a vertical composition".

This was a decision which gained him the cover of *L'Obs*, though their art direction was not very sensitive, obscuring the vital element of the statue behind the magazine logo and trimming the image to a squarer format. But Martin did not realise he had what has been described as one of the great reportage photographs of the 21st century – certainly of the young 2015.

He went home and had a drink with friends. At midnight, he decided to pick a photo to put up on Twitter, more to show his participation in the day's events than to promote his work.



"I tweeted it without asking myself the question whether it was the best of the series, or whether I should put it on Divergence to sell", he admitted.

In the morning, he found that his picture had been retweeted thousands of times and his email was full of requests from media all round the world.

"At Divergence, there are many photographers I admire who do this kind of picture better than me. I feel a bit opportunistic...", he told *L'Obs*.

The magazine analysed his picture on-line after publishing the cover. Their art editor overlaid the Fibonacci spiral linked to the Golden Ratio, to show how the eye is drawn in round the scene to its resting-point in front of the "pencil as sword" waving figure.

"It was not premeditated", they quote Martin as saying, "but I'm happy because this is the type of composition Marc Riboud would like". His work with Riboud included archiving and cataloguing the photojournalist's work and organising exhibitions.

In the tradition of Cartier-Bresson and Riboud alike, the picture is not cropped, as a set of 'contact print' thumbnails of the sequence shows.

Another painting mentioned by web commenters was the *Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault. We would also have to mention *Raising the Flag at Iwo Jima*, for the dynamic triangle or pyramid.

The pencil swordsman was also caught by the lenses of Reuters and television crews. His name is Charles and he apparently kept up this pose for five hours, brandishing his weapon, so he was a fairly predictable part of the action.

"The smoke saved the picture", Martin told *L'Obs*. "I was lucky! Otherwise, it would have been pitch black". Had it been daylight, he says he would have included more of the background to show the setting.

The crowd gathered after the Republican March, singing and taking smartphone pictures. As the crowd dispersed, the group of diehards remained round the statue. The march had been solemn, respecting the dead, but the evening brought more of a protest and celebration of freedom, with the clown nose and giant pencil.

Martin has been happy to see his image 'go viral' round the world though he reserves his views on the issues involved. He prefers to remain an unbiased observer of events – in the great tradition of French photojournalism.



See: www.martin-argyroglo.com

Architectural photography by Martin Argyroglo

Right: Chantier du château de Rentilly – deuxième lieu du frac île-de-france – Bona Lemerrier architects/Xavier Veilhan/Alexis Bertrand (setting design)



Le jardin du musée du Quai Branly, conceived by the landscape gardener Gilles Clément. Paris, 2012.



La Maison radieuse (Cité radieuse de Rezé), Nantes, 2014 – by Le Corbusier



29 rue Riquet - Paris XIX. François Noël, architect, 2011.



Le centre Georges Pompidou (CNAC), Beaubourg, Paris, 2012.



Suvarnabhumi Airport. Bangkok, 2007. Helmut Jahn, architect.



Interior, Nelson Wilton - Café des Concerts à la cité de la Musique.

ONLY IN ENGLAND

More than 100 images in the exhibition *Only In England*, around half of which are new prints selected by Martin Parr, are humorous yet melancholic photographs taken between 1966 and 1969. As a body of work they beautifully reflect English customs and identity, as well as Ray-Jones' innovative approach.

Also included in this National Media Museum/Science Museum touring show are around fifty of Parr's own rarely seen early black and white photographs from *The Non-Conformist*, a series which shows how an early introduction to Ray-Jones' work affected Parr's emerging style.

"Don't take boring pictures" was a self-imposed rule Tony Ray-Jones lived by throughout his all-too-short career. Documenting ordinary English life, his images were a startling departure from anything else being produced at the time. They quickly attracted the attention of the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, where they were exhibited in 1969. Ray-Jones died from leukaemia aged just 30, in 1972.

Sandra Penketh, Liverpool's Director of Art Galleries, said: "These photographs are an evocative record of a time before 'selfies' and mass media. English beaches, markets, streets and tea rooms all come under Ray-Jones' watchful eye. The subjects are delightfully unpretentious and natural, as though they aren't even aware of the photographer's presence."

Intriguing ephemera – notebooks, layouts and lists – from the Ray-Jones's archive are included in the exhibition and give viewers a touching insight into his dedication.

Sandra Penketh continued: "Ray-Jones was passionate about photography and we're delighted to be exhibiting these powerful images at the Walker Art Gallery. They not only reveal a fascinating composite of English eccentricities, but the ability of candid, studied photography to capture this spirit."

In 1970, Martin Parr, a photography student at Manchester Polytechnic, was introduced to Ray-Jones. Struck by the ground-breaking images, Parr went on to produce *The Non-Conformists*, shot in black and white in Hebden Bridge and the surrounding Calder Valley. The title for the project came from the Methodist and Baptist churches that dotted the region and



Wimbledon, 1967 by Tony Ray-Jones © National Media Museum



Barry Island, c. 1967 by Tony Ray-Jones © National Media Museum

defined a communal character. It is clear to see within these quietly observational images of various aspects of traditional life, the legacy of Ray-Jones.

When describing his first encounter with Ray-Jones' work Martin Parr said: "It was his ability to construct complex images, with everyone perfectly placed in the uniquely English atmosphere and

surroundings, which struck a cord of recognition – and envy – in me."

The exhibition forms part of the **LOOK/15: Liverpool International Photography Festival** which launches on Saturday May 17th 2015 and will see dozens of photographic exhibitions and events taking place across the city.

Only in England: Photographs by

Tony Ray-Jones and Martin Parr is one of a series part funded by the European Union (The European Regional Development Fund).

The exhibition has been organised and toured by the National Media Museum and Science Museum's Media Space.

ERDF, say the organisers, is making a real difference to people and businesses in the North West.

Photographs by Tony Ray-Jones and Martin Parr

An exhibition exploring the lasting influence of Tony Ray-Jones on the development of British photography runs at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, until June 7th 2015.



Wedding, Crimsworth Dean Methodist Chapel, 1977. Martin Parr © Martin Parr, Magnum Photos



Mankinholes Methodist Chapel, 1975. Martin Parr © Martin Parr, Magnum Photos

The current programme, which is worth €755 million, is enhancing the competitiveness of the region's economy by supporting growth in enterprise and employment.

As for the photographers, they provide excellent brief biographies. Tony Ray-Jones was born in Somerset in 1941 and studied graphic design at the London School of Printing before

leaving the UK in 1961 to study on a scholarship at Yale. He followed this with a year long stay in New York during which he attended classes by the influential art director Alexey Brodovitch, and became friends with photographers Joel Meyerowitz and Garry Winogrand.

In 1966 he returned to find a Britain still divided by class

and tradition. *A Day Off – An English Journal*, a collection of photographs he took between 1967-1970 was published posthumously in 1974 and in 2004 the National Media Museum held a major exhibition, *A Gentle Madness: The Photographs of Tony Ray-Jones*.

Martin Parr was born in Epsom, Surrey in 1952. He graduated from Manchester Polytechnic

in 1974 and moved to Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire, where he established the 'Albert Street Workshop', a hub for artistic activity in the town. Fascinated by the variety of non-conformist chapels and the communities he encountered in the town he produced *The Non-Conformists*. In 1984 Parr began to work in colour and his breakthrough publication *The Last Resort* was published in 1986. A Magnum member, Parr is now an internationally renowned photographer, filmmaker, collector and curator.

The Tony Ray-Jones archive comprises approximately 700 photographic prints, 1700 negative sheets, 2700 contact sheets, 600 boxes of Ektachrome/Kodachrome transparencies. It also includes ephemera such as notebooks, diary pages, and a maquette of *England by the Sea* made by Tony Ray-Jones.

About the curation

With Birmingham's library photographic collection under threat, and constant repetitive erosion of galleries and museums under the present government's austerity agenda, it's worth our stating the credentials of the organisers of this show.

Media Space explores relationships between, and lesser known histories of, photography, science, art and technology. Media Space is a collaboration between the Science Museum and the National Media Museum in Bradford, home of the National Photography Collection.

The Science Museum Art Collection contains over 8,000 works, including 290 oil paintings, relating to the history of science, technology and medicine from the antique to the contemporary. Their Contemporary Arts Programme commissions artists and keeps the creative stream running. www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/smap

The National Media Museum in Bradford aims to be "the best museum in the world" and runs the Bradford International Film Festival and Bradford Animation Festival, and is home to Europe's first IMAX cinema screen.

This exhibition is at the Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street, Liverpool – admission free, 10am-5pm, every day. Information 0151 478 4199 or liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker Visit if you can.





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BEATING THE CHILL FACTOR

OK, so we live in a country with a proper full-on Winter. And it's not over until well after Easter.

It never fails to amaze me just how cold it gets in this country and how long it takes before we get lasting signs of Spring. If, like me, you shoot predominantly outdoors then you need to find ways to ensure that the early months of the year do not end up being a barren period for your business.

As you read this, I have once again started my annual book project **The Children of London**. I ask parents to apply for their children to be photographed at their favourite location around the city and I've shot everywhere from Wembley Stadium to their back garden. This year will be the 6th edition and the applications are flooding in. With the prospect of over 100 shoots during the year I can't afford to sit around and wait for things to heat up.

One of my calling cards for the book has always been good action shots. The way I see it, it's what children do best... run around and shout and scream, so why not capture that? Shooting kids on chilly days (or even wet days) can be challenging so you have to make it fun. A little bit of action will warm them up and ensure that they are feeling good when it comes to the moody close ups that parents love so much.

I have a standard routine for all my portrait shoots that is designed to ensure I get enough variety of images to make my viewings worth the visit. Running, spinning, leaping, sitting, close up, three-quarter length, full length etc, etc and don't forget to tell them to bring bikes, scooters and of course *dogs* on the shoot day. If you do this on every shoot you are never in need of a stunning image and you are bound to get the range of images your client wants to see.

It's a good tip to start the shoot with the action stuff as it breaks the ice (excuse the pun). Most children will be expecting to have to stand in front of the photographer and pose so when I ask them to go over there and run back towards me, frankly, they are very happy to do it. Don't forget to keep the motivation going with lots of encouragement.

Set your shutter priority at 1/1000th or even faster as you need to be sure you are getting it sharp. This can be challenging in low light so don't be afraid to use the high ISO settings. Gone are the

Richard Bradbury explains how shooting action portraits will keep the kids warm and the frame frozen, in months where outdoor sessions remain a gamble against the elements



days when ISO 1000 plus meant unusable shots – my Canon 5D MkIII is rarely set below 640 even in Summer. If you don't believe me then do some tests. ISO 800 is the new 100 ASA, so use the speed and if you need to go to 3200 or 6400 – embrace the grain.

I like to use backlight predominantly, filling in the front for a classical, painterly effect but you can shoot with sidelight or even front light if the location is limiting. To shoot well-lit side lit images chose the spot that you want to shoot, then hide your

parent with a bounce reflector behind a convenient bush. This has the added bonus of getting the parent involved in the shoot which they always love. As the child passes the spot, take your shot. Your shadows will be filled in beautifully and the effect is



totally natural. This technique also gives you the chance to pre-focus and get it super sharp. As a rule I do not like front light especially from a high sun position but there are many occasions where the location just forces you to be on that spot. The way to handle it is to fill in the nasty harshness with flash. Set your gun to a high speed sync (HSS, FP etc) mode. It works wonders. The speedlight pumps out an imperceptibly pulsing burst of micro-flashes giving you the option to crank up the shutter speed. The inevitable loss of power works in your favour as you only need the flash to fill in not blast out the subject. The result is a clean contemporary feel that will sell time and again. It's generally a shot that the kids themselves like the most.

Make sure that you use the environment to help create interesting images as you can get great effects from blowing leaves and splashing puddles. Simply spinning the child on the spot can create some wonderful effects both close up and full length with flying hair and sharp eyes. Be prepared though to keep repeating these shots until you get a usable image. You will rarely get it in one take so try to control and then refine the detail with every frame to get it just as you want it. Strangely, I often find that the subject enjoys this repeat process as it shows a

Above: sunshine and flash combined – Battersea Power Station on a crisp early May day, and a little girl shows Westminster how to spin. Below, Fulham Emirates stadium, a perfect location for a young fan. Bottom, be sure to invite the family dog to join in, as it will make the pictures even more popular.



commitment to your art and gives them a sense of being part of the creative process. These are usually the shots the client remembers the most creating a great sense of anticipation on the viewing day.

When shooting children there are two good reasons to make action portraits a standard part of your creative armoury.

Firstly they serve to break down the barrier between you and the child. You have the best part of an hour and a half to make that shy nervous child your best mate. Running and jumping about will put the child at ease, laughing and shouting as they go.

Secondly, action shots are a great way to introduce your client to something that is a little bit more than the regular look back over the shoulder portrait. It's important to give the client something better than they expect every time you shoot, something different, something they will tell their friends about. Action shots show a moment in time that is difficult for the non-professional to capture.

Wrap up warm and don't be afraid to show off your skills!

– Richard Bradbury FMPP FBIPP



For more stuff that photographers like to talk about go to
www.reciprocity.photo
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INSPIRING LIGHT

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LIFE ON THE LINE

Cristian Barnett spent seasons travelling through the many different nations whose people live and work on the Arctic Circle – from Russia to Scandinavia, through Greenland and the far north of America. His book *Life on the Line* is the result.



Cristian Barnett is most likely to be found shooting perfect food for Sainsburys or top chefs Tom Kerridge and Michel Roux Jnr when he's not embarked on editorial ventures for *Country Living* or *Saga*. His food specialisation encompasses many disciplines from still life through interiors to travel and portraiture and this has "always been its greatest appeal", he says.

So it is a bit of a surprise to find that his other passion, documentary photography, has taken him for several years to one of the least foodie environments on Earth, the narrow inhabited zone far north which marks the Arctic Circle. His book *Life on the Line* was published in late 2014 and reveals a vibrant, colourful world which responded







beautifully to his choice of real colour negative film as the recording medium.

Indeed, these scans from Kodak Portra 160 and 400 rollfilm, shot on his trusted Hasselblad 503, are amongst the most colour-pure work we have received in the past year. They have an intricate depth of colour microcontrast rarely seen in digital images.

"I would also shoot black and white Polaroids until they went bust", Cris says, "then Fujifilm black and white instants until they stopped making them and finally Fujifilm colour instants. Almost all the portraits were shot using the 80mm though some were shot on the 120mm or 60mm. I also took some – usually the landscapes and streetscapes – on a Mamiya 6 with a 75mm lens, which was great as a back-up and lightweight handheld camera.

"One of the benefits of shooting with a waist-level finder on the Hasselblad is that you don't need a big tripod, helping to keep down the weight for travelling. I shot film simply because when I began the project in March 2006 this was how I shot all my commercial work. I didn't buy my first digital Hasselblad until Autumn of 2006.

"Putting together the book and exhibition of Life on the Line made me realise just how much I loved shooting square pictures. When my new Hasselblad H5D had problems last summer, I asked Hasselblad to change it for CFV-50 which they did – so now I'm shooting commercial work on my 503 for the first time in eight years."

Although it sounds extreme shooting in the Arctic, Cris was rarely working in very cold conditions. "Due to issues of

daylight I would choose to shoot my 'winter' trips in early October or late March when the days are longer and temperatures not so cold. That said, I did do some December and February trips which were cold (minus 28°C was my coldest shooting day, in Sweden). On my very first trip to Finland two of my 'blad lenses and my Mamiya stopped working. Experience has taught me that I can work trouble free above minus 15°C (also the temperature at which the moisture in my nose freezes – a peculiar sensation) but below that I can begin to have issues. At least I didn't have problems with batteries... the 503 doesn't have any."

The greatest expense and challenge of Cris's Arctic Circle project was getting to the places he wanted to visit. "Even flying internally in Scandinavia can

break the bank", he tells us. "The weather when flying is also a constant worry. I once spent about four hours flying from Winnipeg in Canada up to the Arctic in a plane which stopped at numerous destinations along the way, only to return again because we were unable to land where I needed to be. My flight back was also delayed by a day but this turned out to be a bit of good luck as I was treated to a spectacular display of Aurora.

"Getting to some of the more remote places in Russia was probably the biggest challenge, and the most fun. A visit to the nomadic Nennets people requires a flight to Moscow, a further internal flight, a 24-hour train journey, a taxi, a gruelling trip in a pimped 4x4 across the tundra and finally a couple of hours wedged into a sledge pulled by a ski-doo."

Apart from showing the





pictures on his website, Cris has not used the pictures for any purpose other than the book and magazine/online features which (like this) are about the book. "I want this project to have integrity, not only to reflect how I feel about the project but also out of respect to the many amazing people I met and photographed on my thirteen visits to the Arctic." Life on the Line as an exhibition, printed by Cris personally, went on display at Betws-y-Coed in North Wales after an initial London showing. From April 11th to July 12th it will be at the Discovery Point Museum in Dundee.

The book: Life on the Line, hardback, 208 pages, published by Polarworld, 24.9 x 2.5 x 25.8 cm, ISBN-10 0955525586, price £30.



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STEWART WALL RECORDED IN IMAGES THE CRAFT OF A MAN WHO RECORDS A COMMUNITY

THE STONEMASON

Stewart Wall moved to the Lincolnshire town of Caistor six years ago after a 30-year career in staff and freelance press photography. Like many photographers, he left school to go straight into a working environment after an Easter holiday trial with the Brentwood Gazette led to a job offer. Later he worked for national newspapers including The Times, The Sun, The Daily Express and The Sunday Telegraph.

Relocating with his wife and young daughter to a town they saw as "an example of rural England at its very best where people still stop to talk to each other in the street – something lost in many parts", he opened a studio in the former Fire Station where he continues business as a commercial photographer with press connections and a growing interest in documentary work. This led him to submit for an ARPS



Above: putting up the exhibition at the Caistor Arts Centre, with both framed and box canvas prints fishplate mounted to the walls. Right: stonemason Colin Wood gave demonstrations to visitors. Bottom image: see story below.

and with that in mind, to create a series featuring Colin Wood, a local monumental mason and the last of three generations in this craft to occupy the same family cottage and stonemason's yard for over 100 years. It turned out that 69-year-old Colin had more than just the heritage of churchyards to show – his grandfather John

Henry, who moved the business to Vine Cottage in 1888, was also a photographer and used the attractive old house as an outdoor studio set for local family portraits. Colin is seen in Stewart's picture below holding a group portrait of the Colton family, brewers of Nettleton, taken there in 1895.

Stewart Wall also photographs

local wedding and portraits, and now runs training courses for enthusiasts from all over the country, with the inevitable close contact with the local arts centre. The combination of local history and Stewart's successful ARPS panel led to an exhibition in January at the Caistor Arts and Heritage Centre which is a perfect









example of how a photographer can serve – and benefit from serving – a community. The exhibition was entirely his own print work, made using an Epson Stylus Pro 7890 large format printer and papers sourced from OnlinePaper.co.uk, his regular supplier. He uses many paper types in the course of his work, including Canson and Ilford photographic fine art materials. For this exhibition, he chose Kodak photo paper for the framed prints, and Permajet canvas for additional display panels. He stretcher-mounted the canvas box style prints himself.

"I love the whole craft of photography", he says. "Anything I am able to do myself, I will do myself. I enjoy the printing and presentation side of the business as much as I do shooting the images." Although he considered bespoke framing, Stewart says he found the ideal frame at The Range – at a cost which allowed a large exhibition to be affordable.

The arts centre put considerable effort into the display mounting, fixing the prints rather than hanging them loose, and added a programme including both 'meet the artist' and 'meet the subject' – Colin Wood brought his tools and samples of stone,

showing his skills to visitors and to schoolchildren in particular.

Stewart was not sponsored but gave his suppliers fair mention in the publicity. "I shot the images on the Olympus OM-D E-M5", he says, "primarily on the Olympus 17mm but also using the Panasonic Leica 25mm f1.4 and the Panasonic 35-100mm. The images were post-produced in Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom".

Stewart gets involved in RPS and other photographic activities and returned to his roots for the Autumn 2014 Photomonth in East London. "I borrowed a Fuji X-T1 and a few lenses including the superb 56mm f1.2", he says. "I took it along to a Leica day where I also shot with the latest Leica rangefinder and the superb 35mm f1.4. I enjoyed the Leica but, I think, the Fuji more – I found having all the controls on the top of the camera really useful".

The Caistor Arts and Heritage Centre was funded by The Big Lottery Fund and featured in the BBC's Sarah Beany *SOS Villages* series.

– DK

For further information see:
www.stewartwall.com

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www.28ploughhill.co.uk



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COLLECTED FOR THE NATION

More than 250 highlights of the greatest historic and contemporary collection of photography in Britain can be seen this year, many for the first time together in the context of a large show.

The exhibition *Drawn by Light: The Royal Photographic Society Collection* features images by some of photography's most distinguished practitioners including Talbot, Fenton, Coburn and McCullin

The collection began at the behest of Prince Albert and documents nearly 200 years of artistic and technological advances in photography.

Historically significant images are joined by examples of the technology that shaped photography from the 1820s to the present day. It forms part of the National Photography Collection, cared for by the National Media Museum in Bradford, and will be open from March 20th – June 21st 2015.

Founded in 1853 as the Photographic Society, the RPS's early members included Roger Fenton, John Dillwyn Llewellyn and many of Britain's early

The Royal Photographic Society Collection, now part of the National Photography Collection at the National Media Museum in Bradford, is the basis of their major exhibition from solstice to midsummer



Left: *Afghan Girl, Pakistan, 1984*, Steve McCurry (The Royal Photographic Society Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford © Steve McCurry). Above: *The Valley of the Shadow of Death, 1855*, Roger Fenton (The Royal Photographic Society Collection © National Media Museum, Bradford /SSPL). Below: *The Two Ways of Life, 1857*, Oscar Rejlander (The Royal Photographic Society Collection © National Media Museum, Bradford /SSPL).

photographers. The Society started making acquisitions when Prince Albert, who along with Queen Victoria was a keen advocate of photography, suggested it should collect images to document the progress of the technology. Having continued to grow over the subsequent 160 years, the RPS has counted many of photography's best known exponents among its membership, while acquiring examples of their work.

In 2003 the National Media Museum, with assistance from the Art Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Yorkshire Forward, acquired the RPS Collection and incorporated it into the National Photography Collection. Since then the Museum has been home to its 250,000 images, 8,000 items of photographic equipment and 31,000 books, periodicals and documents. At the time of the acquisition the James Bond film producer and photography collector Michael G Wilson OBE said it transformed the National Photography Collection into 'one of the most important collections in the world'.

Drawn by Light first appeared at Media Space in the Science







Museum and is presented in collaboration with the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen in Mannheim, Germany, where it will go on display in 2017.

Among more than 250 remarkable, rare and sometimes unique objects, the exhibition features key artefacts that tell the story of the development of photography: Niépce heliographs from the 1820s (some of the very earliest photographic images); the first commercially published book illustrated by photographs, William Henry Fox Talbot's camera lucida sketchbook *The Pencil of Nature* (1844 – 1846); and seminal works such as Oscar Rejlander's *The Two Ways of Life* (1857).

Many other historically significant figures from photography are represented including Julia Margaret Cameron, Roger Fenton, Lewis Carroll and Hugh Welch Diamond.

The collection is constantly expanding: renowned contemporary photographers whose work features include Don McCullin, Terry O'Neill and Martin Parr among others. Steve McCurry's famed *Afghan Girl* image, taken in 1984, is the most recent acquisition and was added to the RPS Collection in November 2014.

The exhibition is part of the 2015 Art in Yorkshire programme. Entry to the exhibition is free.



www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk

Facing page, top: Leicester Square, 1896, Paul Martin. Bottom: Portrait of Christina, 1913, Lieutenant Colonel Mervyn O'Gorman. Top left: *Sempervivum Percarneum*, 1922, Albert Renger-Patzsch (The Royal Photographic Society Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford © Albert Renger-Patzsch). Top right: *Bewegungsstudie* (Movement Study), 1926, Rudolf Koppitz. Left: Chimney, c.1934, Noel Griggs. All images unless otherwise credited: The Royal Photographic Society Collection © National Media Museum, Bradford /SSPL.



Angus McBean London

Above: Audrey Hepburn, 1950, Angus McBean (The Royal Photographic Society Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford © Angus McBean).

Facing page, top: Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico, 1941, Ansel Adams (The Royal Photographic Society Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford © The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust).

Bottom left: Larry Burrows on assignment in Vietnam (The Royal Photographic Society Collection © National Media Museum, Bradford /SSPL).

Bottom right: The Turkish Bath, 1986, Calum Colvin (The Royal Photographic Society Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford © Calum Colvin).



Handwritten signature



SONY A7II and A7S: SYSTEM'S NEW FULL FRAME STABLEMATES



Sony's line-up of mirrorless full frame cameras and lenses looks set to remain a unique system into the foreseeable future, as no other maker has risen to the challenge. It's also unique in the way the three main body models – the A7 (and MkII), A7R and A7S – meet different requirements by having a good all-round 24 megapixel sensor, a high resolution 36 megapixel sensor, and a very low noise high sensitivity 12 megapixel.

You can find a fairly similar range in Nikon's professional DSLR system, with the low-noise 16 megapixel D4S matching the Sony A7S achievement of EI 409,600 and the high resolution D810, sandwiching the D750 24 megapixel model which has suffered a brief setback from internal flare reflections requiring a recall of stock.

The Sony bodies are all far more similar to each other than these Nikon models are. There's no sense that the entire weight, shape and size of the body needs to increase just because it's more 'professional'. In this aspect Sony mirrors Leica – design a basic body and change the details. The A7 range also mirrors Leica in being the only other full frame, rangefinder lens compatible system around.

For a very short period, I had all three Sony models together. I have been using the A7R since November 2014 without enjoying it as much as you would expect, then had a rather beaten-up A7S on loan from Sony to review. Rather than risk getting an A7 MkII in the same sorry state two or three months down the line from the queue of consumer bloggers, I decided to buy one. This is a risk with Sony as it's a system with a high rate of buyer's remorse, partly because the lenses are so limited in choice and so expensive for their

Above: A7II, A7R and A7S lined up in our studio.

Right: A7II with LA-EA4 and 135mm f1.8 CZ



Below: noise tests at maximum auto

ISO for A7S left (409,600); A7II centre and A7R right, both at ISO 25,600.



specification. A 16-35mm f4, one of the more desirable lens types for general work, costs about twice as much as tried and trusted versions from Canon and Nikon.

Without being able to compare many functions, the one thing I was able to check thoroughly with all three together was the ISO equivalent range. I already knew that the A7S maintains editorially useful quality up to around EI 64,000 – not 6400. Up into the six-figure range matters remain impressive but frankly not so useful. At the top rating, the lower left side and corner of the image is degraded by pinkish fogging, a tendency at the top sensitivity of the other sensors as well.

What emerges is that at real-world working sensitivities – say from 1600 to 25,600 – the A7S is far ahead of anything the other larger sensors can yield even if downsampled to match its 12 megapixels. The grainy noise structure is simply much finer, and if you made a double page repro from high ISO shots on all three cameras, the A7S would look as if it had a higher pixel count, not lower. It holds detail that well.

The overall loser is the most traditional sensor – the one I've just acquired, the 24 megapixels of the A7 MkII. It's no way as good a sensor as either the A7R (D810-type quality and sharpness) or the A7S (reminiscent of our first

experiences when the Nikon D3 arrived and enabled almost noise-free EI 6400 files).

But... the A7 MkII has the one thing I have missed since parting with the A99, Sony's bulkier professional grade 'SLT' full frame. It's got stabilisation, somehow shoehorned into a body with just a small size increase over the original A7 design. Sony has taken advantage of a few millimetres to beef up the right hand grip, change the shutter release and control wheel positions, and generally improve ergonomics so that even rather difficult buttons like the right thumb operated focus magnify and image magnify default positions become more sure in operation. All the buttons are improved in feel and the body finish is a retro fine crinkle coating, like parts of a classic Swiss Alpa of the 1960s.

This makes the A7 MkII by far the surest of the A7 series bodies to grip – I've installed an L-plate tripod adaptor on my A7R almost permanently as the extra weight and size makes an improvement, but the A7 MkII doesn't seem to need it. That's just as well, because the changed design means it won't fit any baseplate accessories made for the other sevens.

A7S stealth value

The original A7, like the A99 and current Sony APS-C mirrorless models, has a mechanical capping shutter which must always end the exposure. There's a quiet mode, using electronic first curtain shutter. This is enabled in the ex-factory camera setups as it produces the fastest shutter response time (down to 1/50th of a second, which for experienced old photographers means you anticipate the action and end up firing much too early). It also helps



News photographer David Hedges shot his '24 Hour Economy' photo series using the Sony A7S, to celebrate people who keep the country running while we sleep. Research found that amongst UK workers over 7 million work between the hours of 6pm and 6am. David, Young Photographer of the Year at The Picture Editors' Guild Awards 2013, said: "The ISO range on the Sony A7S allows me to get shots which I previously simply could not achieve without adding some lighting." Above, 1/80th at f5, ISO 5000, APS-C crop with 16-50mm f2.8 lens. Below: 1/400th at f5.6, ISO 6400, 70-200mm f4 G OSS lens at 115mm, full frame. Pictures: ©David Hedges/SWNN.



eliminate camera shake in a system where three of the four bodies and many of the best lenses lack stabilisation.

It's been possible to shoot completely silently for some time, by using live view on some Canon bodies and the rear screen, and almost silently with cameras like the Sony RX1 and RX10 or the Fujifilm X100 which use very lightweight in-lens capping shutters. The A7S enables completely silent capture and because its live view is also the eye-level viewfinder, you can enable a brief review of the captured image to give you more feedback about your timing.

It's an uncanny experience shooting with the A7S at night, in darkness on moonlight, without a sound, with the rear screen turned off to stop the glow and just the EVF to view through. It is as silent as movie shooting in the same conditions and the A7S is the perfect camera for concert, theatre, TV studio and filmset photography.

We all have the image of a paparazzi with chattering motor-drives, clacking shutters and popping flashes surrounding a celeb. The noise alone, recorded, recreates that scene. Now fast forward five years to when every pap uses something like the A7S – no need for flash, motor-drive speed capture without a motor, shutters which work in total silence. Your celeb can be mobbed by a silent crowd of cameras with just the jostling and imprecations of the press corps clearly audible!

Using the acclaimed Carl Zeiss 55mm f1.8 lens (which I found to be good but limiting, like standard lenses of the dim past, because of its very conservative 50cm close focus) I had to try very hard to avoid shooting all kinds of Christmas seasonal stuff at night, totally out place for articles to appear a couple of months later.

Would I buy the camera? Sure, if had unlimited funds and anyone paid decent money for stock sales, because it opens a door for a new generation of Brassai-style night photographers. If I was a street photographer this would be my camera and the 16-35mm f4, despite its modest aperture, would be my choice of lens. That and the 55mm f1.8.

I'd be tempted by my 24mm f2 Sony SSM but even the quiet SSM motor of the SLR system lens is not the near-silent focus of the FE mount series, and when mounted on a mirrorless adaptor it dithers around trying to focus. Full frame adapted Sony lenses also have mechanical aperture mechanism and it clicks. You lose silent operation. I picked up a

couple of excellent Canon lenses – an 85mm f1.8 USM and the lovely little 40mm f2.8 STM – and these have quiet motors and electronic aperture stop-down. They also focused just as well as the Sony SSM A-mount, on a £90 generic Canon EF adaptor.

Indeed, after getting these I had to think – why not just get this body, the best adaptor (Metabones Mark IV with future firmware upgrade possibilities) and use Canon L USM glass? If I had a Canon system, I'd jump for it. The fact is that a full-frame mirrorless lens is usually the same size as a DSLR lens with added adaptor. If anything you save outfit space, and that most certainly applies to any lens over 200mm... mostly because Sony does not yet make any lens over 200mm.

Stable solution

This brings me to the other Sony I've not reviewed in f2 (the A7R has had its examination and nothing has changed to make it better, no firmware fix, only the third party Fotodiox Tough E-Mount to cure its wimpy metal and plastic sandwich body bayonet). The A7 MkII, with its five-axis sensor based stabilisation, is another gift to Canon system owners.

Where there is no EXIF transferring intelligent adaptor for Nikon G lenses on the FE or E mounts, there's a wide choice of Canon adaptors. You can certainly use Nikon lenses on the A7 bodies, with manual aperture setting and focus, and no metadata in the image about your focal length or aperture settings. Adapt Canon EF lenses, and you get the lot – AE, AF, full control from the Sony body, EXIF metadata in your files, and much more.

You get intelligent sensor-based stabilisation. The Canon lens, like a native Sony E lens or an adapted A-mount lens, tells the camera its focal length and the focus distance. This info goes to the stabilisation controller and you get proper IS. While the Sony SSS in the A7II will talk to Sony OSS lenses and mix-and-match the operation of the sensor and the lens (automatically, not under user control) to suit still or movie mode this will not happen with Canon lenses. You can enable Canon IS, and if you turn SSS off in the body, it will work as normal. If you enable SSS, it will conflict with Canon IS, so you should turn off the in-lens system.

However, the beauty of the A7II is that unstabilised Canon lenses which are both cheaper and optically better than the IS variants now have a stabilised body. You



The A7MkII, right in the above shot, has a distinctly different top layout moving the shutter release and front control wheel forward on a much deeper grip, and making function buttons C1, C2 and C3 easier to use.



With the A7MkII on the left and the earlier A7S/R design on the right in this pair, the body depth difference required to house the stabilisation mechanism is very noticeable, as is the new finish, eye position, balance and 'prism' design.



Here's where feedback counts: Sony users told the maker that the hinged rear screen design of the earlier A7 models (right) was preventing its operation on larger tripod heads. The A7MkII, left, has a screen which can be tilted without fouling the tripod head or quick change plate.

can pick up an unstabilised Canon L 70-200mm f4 for half the price of Sony's bulkier FE 70-200mm f4 G OSS. You may even have one you never use.

I quickly found that the 85mm f1.8 and 40mm f2.8 were great companions for the A7II. I can use my 40mm f1.4 Nokton M-mount lens, or my Samyang 85mm f1.4



The Canon 40mm f2.8 STM pancake not only autofocuses accurately (if slowly) when used on a suitable EF adaptor, it enables functioning stabilisation and proves stunningly sharp. Here, 1/60th at f9 hand-held proved tripod-sharp at ISO 50.

manual A-mount, and programme in the focal length to get operative in-body stabilisation, but I have to go menu diving with every lens change and I do miss the convenience of body controlled aperture, PASM exposure modes, acceptable AF for static subjects and that embedded metadata which will even invoke Adobe lens profile in *Lightroom* or *ACR*.

There is one lens which I'm thinking of getting despite dumb manual mounting. The A7R does not like Voigtlander 12mm or 15mm lenses much. The A7II is very happy with them, without the strong colour vignetting and odd tinted patches. A 12mm f5.6 beckons... after all, the EXIF hardly matters, you can spot the shots easily and it's normally just set to f11 and left alone.

With the year ahead to use this camera properly, it's on target to push the A7R aside for general travel, PR, and product photography. The 36 megapixel sensor remains superior for landscape, architecture and tripod-mounted slow cooking. The A7II is four times as sensitive, noise for

noise, as my lovely DSLR Alpha 900. It also handles nearly as well. I don't care what those keen to justify their purchases, or loyalty, say about EVF versus optical. When an optical finder is as good as the A900 – equal best beside the Canon 1DX – it makes you aware that even the best EVF is not as comfortable for prolonged use.

My reservations, on initial acquaintance, are that despite claims the five-axis stabilisation seems worse, shot for shot, than the A900's in-body SSS for human tripod work. The video performance is supposedly wonderful, but I've never had any problem with Sony in-body video SSS from the earliest A55.

As for the phase detect focus on sensor, object tracking, eye priority focus, face recognition and such stuff it's probably wonderful for those whose main object in life is to shoot their toddler bombing around in front of the lens and then post the result on Facebook. I prefer to pick my point of focus, disable all the clever stuff and retain control. I found the random results of leaving things to the camera rarely agreed with me.

One thing I don't like about the A7II is the quality of the reviewed image. Magnified views never look very sharp and this is deceptive after using the A7R where the EVF or screen image is far more detailed and less sharpened.

Once the raw files are opened everything looks fine.

When photographing the A7II, the superior design of the battery door catch was obvious (on the other models it's too easy to open accidentally) but so was the size of the grip. It looks big enough to have taken the larger Sony battery used by the Alpha DSLRs, with 70% more capacity. The small 1020mAh battery remains a weakness of the entire E-mount system. For some reason, the SD card door has been redesigned and where it's larger and firmer on the earlier A7 models, it's a flimsy door easily nudged open on the II.

As for the issues with lens mounts on the body, the A7S improved greatly on the A7 and A7R by using a one-piece solid metal bayonet. The A7II is even tougher and tighter, mounting lenses rock-solidly and proving very tight with many adaptors. I had to use a plumber's wrench to remove one adaptor from the A7S and decided it should never even be attempted on the A7II. I have not come across any system with so much variation in tolerances and fit for bayonet as the Sony FE mount. I've also never come across any system with such a tendency to leak light, whether through third party adaptors or lenses with chromed bayonet mounts piping the light in despite an apparently snug fit. My guess is that all

systems have often done this, it's just the super thin 18mm body register which lets this light creep get to the sensor. The same issue in an SLR body would not create a visible light patch.

Conclusion

If you want mirrorless full frame, you're going to be picking between Leica and Sony. This does make the Sony lenses seem inexpensive and ambitious in specification! Consider this: all three current Sony A7 bodies – R, S and II – can be bought for the price of a single Leica or indeed a single Canon D1X. They would fit really neatly in a foam block flight case, reminding of when I used to have three SLR bodies lined up with black and white, colour slide and colour negative loaded ready to swap between. They have a retro quality to them and have become the standard way to get the best from vintage lenses, a new obsession for enthusiasts.

For a working outfit, I'd be getting all three. That's not something often considered for mainstream DSLR systems. This could be the future shape of professional kit. Now just wait for those silent, flash-free press scrums...

www.sony.co.uk
www.photoclubalpha.com



SKY HIGH

Drones were one of the *must haves* last Christmas – but there is more of a possibility to these devices than either as a plaything for teenagers, or at the other end of the scale, a means of monitoring enemies and waging war at a distance.

Put a drone – or unmanned aerial vehicle, as our respondents prefer to refer to the devices – in the hands of someone with a creative mind however, and the possibilities to achieve the kind of work that you'd previously have required either a helicopter or a very long pole to get close to, are there. To canny photographers and film-makers, these are aerial camera platforms, and the likes of miniature action cameras such as the Go Pro at the amateur/enthusiast end, and the Red camera and Panasonic GH4 at the pro end, have enabled business and creative offerings to be expanded and new clients won. At the very least, being the owner of a drone and knowing how to use it will put you ahead of the competition, as we discover from speaking to those who have taken the leap.

Chris Taylor

FOR NORFOLK-BASED stills photographer Chris Taylor, who normally specializes in weddings and portraits, aerial/drone photography is just another string to his bow and means of differentiation from the rest of the herd, commercially speaking. It's also an expansion on his core social and wedding photography work, as well as his time spent as a lifeboat volunteer. Chris's route into providing aerial photography is that it is something that he has been interested in for a while, but

Is a bird, is it a plane? Maybe it's a drone or a pole! Gavin Stoker talks to four photo businesses which get their feet off the ground for viewpoints aloft



Above: Chris Taylor's Phantom 2 Vision+ drone. Below: Sheringham invites the risk of flying over open sea...



was waiting for the technology to reach a level at which he felt he could join in. That turning point came when the company **DJI** released the **Phantom 2 Vision+** in spring last year.

"It's an all-in-one package with a camera that can shoot Raw files, and has a built-in gimbal/stabilizer," he explains. "The features on it are just incredible for the money you pay. And it all arrives from the manufacturer ready to fly. As it can shoot decent quality images you can produce multiples, bracket the exposures and shoot panoramas. OK, so the detail is not up there with the Canon EOS 5D Mark III, but it's a great one to learn on as I'm setting up that side of the business, with a view to then upgrading to a better quality camera, possibly this spring.

"Once they brought this out, I went for it, and it's opened up a whole new range of different viewpoints and business avenues. I shoot commercially for local businesses including holiday homes, and do all the photography for Camp Beaumont and Kingswood, the kids' holiday camps. The video team that usually goes with us actually had one of the early Phantoms and though the technology was initially a little bit flaky, it was enough to pique my interest."

Although the lens on the Phantom drone is presently fixed and can (says Chris) tend to cause horizons to 'bow' if the camera's not completely level, you can tweak matters to a limited degree to get rid of some of the distortion: "You can simply reduce the width of your frame which does straighten things out a little." The intention is that the photographer will continue to do his social



Drone photography does not have to be high level, as this oblique view of juxtaposed solar and cereal farming shows

photography and 'ground based' commercial work alongside this latest high-flying venture.

"It took a long time to become CAA qualified," he notes. "The crazy thing is that anyone can buy one of these drones and fly them – as long as you're not making any money off of it. As soon as you make any financial gain – or the people you give the images to use them commercially – then it becomes a necessity to be certified by the CAA. You have to jump through a number of hoops. I did

a course with a company called **Resource Group**, certified by the CAA to do the training. You have to do 'ground school', which was a three-day course covering basic pilot's type stuff and all the CAA regulations that apply to drones – although many people don't like to call them that because of the military connotations; the proper term is 'UAV' – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle."

Following the ground school there is next the need for a flight assessment, involving a number

of tests to prove your competence at handling the platform you're flying. "And then every time you get a new platform – when, rather than if – I have to then go and do the flight assessment again."

It all sounds like there is a certain amount of investment required in terms of time and money, I suggest. Chris nods. "Also, to be qualified and do the flight assessment, you have to have a minimum of £2 million public liability insurance, which is £500 a year. The course itself was

around £1,500, and there is a lot of commitment and paperwork involved. You have to submit flight cards, a whole set of technical information about your drone and about your emergency procedures, such as if the drone catches fire in flight or you have another aircraft coming towards you."

The photographer adds that maximum altitude for use of his drone is supposed to be 400ft "with visual line of sight", or 500 metres from the controller; 500ft is the minimum for normal

Historic buildings and tourist attractions have been amongst Chris's first subjects for flights





Chris looks for iconic local buildings and landmarks, though he's concerned about the ethics of using the results for stock photos or postcards – if you can photograph private property from the ground and publish the results, why not from the air? The best solution is to ask permission for general use of pictures like this.

aircraft. "So they've built in a 100ft safety margin there. One of the regulations is that you have to have someone with eyes on the device at all times, though you can apply for an extended visual line of sight – which is when it flies out of your vision."

With prices of around £500 to £1,000 for a similar drone, Chris reveals his set up came with a spare battery. Batteries last on average about 25 minutes per battery, and thanks to built-in WiFi it can be controlled via an app for the iPhone. Images at 14 megapixels, or HD720p videos are committed to microSD card. Adobe Raw support is offered.

"I load the images into *Lightroom* as it has the correct camera profile for the Vision+ and so it automatically corrects the image to provide the best results. I've taken shots of a local quarry and printed them out at 18 x 12" and they look great, even if they aren't up to Canon spec. But the technology is moving on so quickly; for example there is a new Inspire 1 model that allows you to remove the camera and fit a different one."

The new model also offers 4K video like the Panasonic GH4, another favoured camera of aerial photographers.

"So the technology is there and DJI have developed a really nice platform whereby when the device takes off the legs lift up out of the way so the camera can rotate 360° whatever the direction the drone is travelling in. But now I think they

really need to work on the optics and sensor and improving the quality of the images."

With about 300 CAA certified drone operators in the UK, Chris notes that the advantage or 'USP' he has is that he's approaching it from a solid photographic background. "Other guys can be hobbyists who've previously flown remote controlled helicopters," he notes. "Whereas as a photographer I'm thinking about composition and working with the light. You can see live what's going on via an iPhone or iPad and you can control the camera settings that way, which is the nice thing. Previously these things came out with a GoPro action camera underneath, which was pretty limited. However, with the Vision+ it feeds down to the *DJI* app, so you can see the images live and take pictures using the buttons on the app. You can capture still photos or video and change the ISO, the white balance – the control is just brilliant. I like the fact that it is integrated and 'all there'."

"One of the main reasons I got into this was that photography has become so saturated that anyone can buy a digital camera and there are a lot of cowboys out there producing really bad quality work and preying on the fact that a lot of people can't tell a decent image from a really crappy one. I thought aerial photography is another niche that could help differentiate me in a really crowded market."

For info, visit:

www.christaylorphoto.co.uk

Nigel Nixon and HeliScan

WHILE YOU may not know his name, you will have seen Nigel Nixon's handiwork if you watched the most recent London-set series of '24'.

Nigel is MD of UK based aerial photography specialists **HeliScan**, who, even in this age of wall-to-wall CGI, helped provide drone camera-shot action sequences for the conspiracy thriller. It appears that extensive use of computer imagery hasn't really replaced the need to sometimes use a drone – or 'camera platform' – but rather has afforded filmmakers the option to mix and match. "We might be shooting overhead shots and CGI will be used to drop the background in," he reveals.

Very much hands-on, Nigel shoots with a rig that has the **Panasonic GH4** system camera as its centrepiece – chosen chiefly for its small, lightweight build, along with its ability to shoot 4K-video. "The 4K material I have shown to people has just blown them away because it's been shot on such a stable platform," he reveals. "I've 'parked' the machine in the air before and people have thought they were looking at a still image until a car or something has gone past because it is so precise and steady. That's a real wow."

Shooting in 4K means that footage shot by Nigel and his team – both a pilot and an observer are required for each filmed sequence – can now be dropped seamlessly



into a sequence shot in 4K by those filmmakers on the ground; a huge advantage.

"For '24' they wanted a sequence of a missile hitting Wembley Stadium. Since there was no way we were going to be allowed to blow up the middle of the pitch, we shot that outside of the stadium and they dropped our sequence into 'Wembley Stadium' later. For movies the ability for us to now shoot in 4K is worth its weight in gold. When you're sitting in Leicester Square and the screen is 60 feet across, there's a big visible difference between 4K material and 2K material – or 1080 – so that's why we're always trying to improve the quality."

"The last series of '24' was made for us really, because they were shooting an exciting series



about drones. And, since flying helicopters around London at low level is a bit of a problem, we got the call. The sequences of drones striking their targets were shot in reverse. We backed out from our 'target' to a height of about 300 or 400ft – as high as we could possibly get – so that when the sequence was used it would be resemble the point-of-view of a missile finding its target. We stuck to that height because if you want to go above 400ft then you're talking the need for a full size helicopter."

Although Nigel Nixon has been involved in airborne sequences and radio controlled aircraft in films for the past 30 years – working on productions including *Empire of the Sun*, *Memphis Belle*, *The Avengers* and *Fast and Furious 6* – this use of drones is a relatively recent thing. In fact, HeliScan was set up as a company just a year ago, when the GH3 was the best lightweight option available on the market.

"At the time expertise in drones only existed in Germany, so we had to go there for it. Then I saw the bills coming in from these guys, which made me think that we could definitely do it more cost effectively. Since then the use of drones for airborne action sequences has gone global within the space of a year – it's unbelievably fast moving."

Whereas TV still appears mainly



Top: the Panasonic GH4 drone rig can be positioned precisely for overhead surveying views, like this house roof

to be shot on Full HD 1080P, movies are now shot digitally at 4K, or above – making the GH4 a serious option. "Until now, in order to achieve that we've had to fly a Red camera, which weighs 3.5kg. That reduces my flight time down to five minutes, so you've really got to be on the ball; the greater the weight, the less flight time."

"The worst is when the filmmakers are all having a conversation about changing something when you're already in the air, so that when they're just about to turn over you have to land. That's an issue because five minutes is not a very long time to establish where you need to

be and what you need to shoot. Apart from the weight the £35,000 price tag for the Red camera is an issue as well, because at the end of the day you are flying a remote controlled vehicle and things can go wrong, even though there's a massive amount of safeguards to stop that happening."

Despite the fact that his team had been shooting with the 1920x1080 resolution GH3 with a lot of success, as it was fine for television work, when Nigel got wind that Panasonic would be introducing the GH4 with its 4k shooting capability, he knew this was a camera he'd have to seek out. "We'd also been using the

Canon 5D MkIII, but even that was 40% heavier than the Lumix GH3, and with no added benefits. It's been quite a learning curve for us and there's been a lot for us to find out about. The GH4 was the first 4K camera really to wholly suit our needs."

"Panasonic was doing a 'show and tell' at Park Cameras, so I went along and grilled the salesman. I took my GH3 and a pair of scales along because I wanted to find out what the GH4 was going to weigh, because the three-axis stabilised mounts, or 'gimbals', that we use are so precise that if we have to balance them, we do so with Blu-Tack. It's that precise. Once the camera's airborne and rocking around, the gimbal will keep it completely stationary in winds of up to 17 miles an hour. It's stunningly accurate."

"And my flight time has more than doubled with the GH4 to 11 minutes. Added to that, other new technologies, such as lithium polymer cells, are probably going to allow me 15 minutes in the air now. Technology's marching on so quickly with new software and firmware updates coming all the time, that it's essential to keep up with it"

What is being shot in the air is monitored on the ground by the camera operator, Nigel's own transmitter if he's acting as observer, plus a third feed going to the director's monitor, where



Shooting over water is not Nigel Nixon's favourite commission as the risks to the whole rig are considerable – with or without water-jet flyers

what's being transmitted will be recorded only for editing purposes. To capture the very highest quality footage from the GH4, HeliScan will also record 'on board', straight to memory card. "4K does eat some memory," he admits, "so we have to have a whole handful of SD cards. We normally use 64GB because we're only flying for a short period of time and we probably complete three shots. Then what happens on the likes of '24' is that a 'data wrangler' will be responsible for collecting all the data off the cameras. The cards are 'locked down', they go in a safe to be archived and you never see them again."

The film business aside, the GH4 is also giving Nigel and HeliScan an introduction to a wider possibility of commercial work – such as shooting video for yachting marinas around the country. "They want video and stills for their websites, so when I'm not working on a film that's what I'll be doing. We can shoot stills of

the marinas and even program our machines to fly at a specific speed, so that if a yacht was travelling at five meters per second, the drone can match it and fly above the sea at about 10 feet to provide a nice POV from the yacht."

Having said that Nigel admits he is less keen on doing shots over water because if something goes wrong he can suffer a 100% loss of camera and equipment. "Waterproof casings are out because of the weight issue," he explains.

In terms of lenses, Nigel uses the Panasonic 15mm prime lens, which he describes as a "great lens. We want as wide an angle as possible but at the same time don't want any distortion; or to use software to get rid of fisheye because you lose a little resolution in the process. With the GH4 we've been able to maintain the highest possible quality. That makes it a game changer for us really."

For info visit:

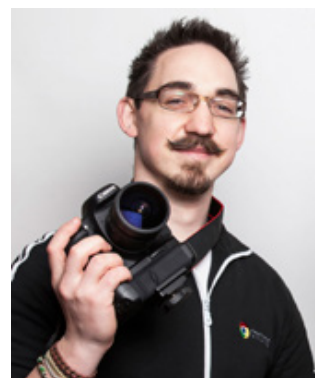
www.heliscan.co.uk

Drew Cunningham (Mr Droogle)

DON'T GET a buzz from drones, but want one aerial photography-enabling device that will ensure you are poles apart from the competition?

Dundee-based Google Trusted Photographer Drew Cunningham looked to the **Nodal Ninja PanoPole**, sourced from Tony Quinn at red-door.co.uk, for a Google Maps Business View shoot that he claims couldn't be done with the normal kit that Google specify.

The PanoPole is an affordable (£264 inc VAT) carbon fibre pole, available in different specifications, enabling photographers (and videographers) to capture images at treetop or roof-level, enabling the production of panoramic views without the need to either clamber up a ladder or deploy a drone or cherry picker. The blurb suggests that the telescopic system is lightweight, portable and literally



designed to help you "reach for the sky"!

The pole slots into a tripod clamp kit, and mounted on the centre column for stability, while an anti-rotation system is claimed to ensure rigidity when you want it. Another advantage is that the system is modular, so photographers can start off with a small module and gradually build

it up in height by stacking it to a larger module.

Pro photographer Drew was in the first tranche of UK pros to be awarded a **Google Trusted** photography franchise when it rolled out in the UK in September 2012. As his main company is called Mr Drew Photography, he named the Google side of his business Mr Droogle (Mr Drew & Google). It currently provides Google Maps Business View in the Scottish Lowlands.

Although he says Google see this as simply providing Street View mapping inside businesses, Drew has taken it beyond just mapping, so as to provide a better showcase for the client. This approach has seen him taking his tripod and camera into the pool in the Victorian Spa at Crieff Hydro Hotel (enabling a length of the pool to be swum in Street View for the first time – see

<http://goo.gl/maps/g0bpZ>) and inside the helicopter flown by Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (<https://goo.gl/maps/KcfPa>)

The normal kit and process Google specify is one of several approved bodies with an approved fisheye lens. Drew shoots on a Canon EOS 7D with Sigma 8mm f/3.5 EX DG lens, using a tripod that enables him to have the camera 1.5 metres high on Nodal Ninja head and perfectly level. Four sets of bracketed JPEGs on prescribed settings are then shot facing each point of the compass. The resulting images are uploaded to Google's systems, where their proprietary software stitches them together into a 360 panorama for each shooting location.

Drew then creates a map of the shoot location and places each panorama at the correct point. He then creates links between them and adds the familiar Street View chevrons to show where you can go from each panorama, before publishing the tour to Google Maps.

A recent treetops shoot for a Scottish outdoor adventure centre brought a unique set of challenges as they wanted to allow customers to virtually 'see' what it was like to actually undertake the activities. The problem was that the treetops course that needed photographing was six metres up in a forest, so a normal tripod couldn't be used. Doing some research online, Drew found the company Red Door and the Nodal Ninja Panopole and realised it could allow him to capture the viewpoint he needed. Explaining the shoot and its challenges led to Google signing off on Drew using non-standard kit and he's been shooting with it since last September.

Inevitably there are still



Apeing around in a Scottish forest – the first Panopole solution



A first for Google – Drew creates a virtual swim round the pool of the Crieff Hydro hotel (carbon fibre tripods come in useful)



Now just hold that pose – Drew's 'tour' into the Scottish Air Ambulance



Components of the very affordable Panopole system

challenges however. "Sometimes, we've had to get the lens higher than the PanoPole will allow, so we've had to put the whole system on top of a stack of wooden pallets (as shown in image)," reveals Drew of the inventive Heath Robinson-style improvisation that sometimes takes place. "It can take anything between 45 and 90 minutes to then be able to get the shot, as, if you're operating with the pole fully extended, the weight of the camera makes it flex slightly at the top and, because of the weight of the lens, each time you turn it 90 degrees for the next shot it alters very slightly. That means we have to re-centre it for each new shot. Otherwise, the PanoPole is very well easy to use and well built.

"Normally we can shoot up to 120 panoramas a day, but on this shoot we're doing well if we get four, given winter daylight hours. But we couldn't have got most of them without the PanoPole. We're close to finishing it and know it will be awesome when it's done. It'll probably give viewers vertigo!"

For information see:

www.mrdroogle.com

Bluesky

PIONEERED during the First World War and developed into a reconnaissance tool during the Second World War, aerial photography in the sense of capturing images from aircraft, seems almost traditional. Continuing that tradition in the digital age is **Bluesky**, an aerial photography business that has grown from a couple of employees to a team of over 20 in the past 11 years. One of only two such outfits in the UK, it is at the cutting edge of what can be achieved from the air, using cameras costing tens of thousands and two light aircraft stationed at East Midlands airport "specially adapted with a hole in them," laughs Bluesky's Technical Director James Eddy. "They've got a hole in the bottom of the fuselage that we mount the camera over, so that it is looking vertically down. We have a Cessna 404 and a Briton Norma Islander, which are twin engines, and we use a pilot and an operator of the camera who makes sure the camera is firing and we're capturing the areas we want to."

Surprisingly perhaps for such high-end kit and approach, James says that his outfit engages in aerial photography speculatively, though it will undertake specific commissions if someone wants a particular area of the country or site of scientific interest documented from the air. "We try to fly over the whole of the country and update things every three years, working with another partner to do that," he reveals. "We fly up and down by county and a typical project might be to photograph 4,000 square



The Microsoft Ultracam on board



kilometres which might take a few days to achieve, because of cloud, the plane running out of fuel or it going dark. We have special software that we use to plan the sortie so we know the geometry and parameters of the camera including lens length; we know that if we fly at a certain height, we will capture a certain amount on the ground."

Also required is that each photograph sufficiently overlaps to be able to provide full cover, with the aerial survey cameras used produced by Microsoft. "They're the equivalent of 280

megapixels – something like 21,000 pixels by 14,000 – they're pretty beefy. Each image is well over 1GB. We also collect four band imagery: red, green, blue and near infrared. So the images are very big and completely Raw; we don't use any compression. Alongside the camera we have special navigation equipment; a very high accuracy GPS kit and an inertial measurement unit – or INU – which measures the pitch and yaw to 1,000th of a degree. So every time we fire off a shot we know within a few centimetres where the frame centre was. We then run specialist software that takes any movement of the aircraft out of the equation and converts them to being flat; if you tilt very slightly by a degree then the photograph is mildly oblique."

With clients including Ordnance Survey and the National Grid, images from a shoot will come back to the Bluesky office for downloading from the removable hard drives. "There's often up to 40 terabytes of data from a sortie. The data comes in its own proprietary camera format so we have to convert that and then run it through a series of levels of processing. First of all we remove any distortion from an image and then we 'triangulate', which is adding the geographical element back in, to turn it into a map in effect. Each pixel covers an area on the ground and we know where every single pixel is to within a few centimetres of its position on the ground. We then do colour balancing and then stick them all together to produce the kind of image that you will see on *Google Earth*. If you look at *Google Earth* for the UK it's all aerial photography and it's often

thousands of photographs taken to represent a single county. In a nutshell that's what we do."

Bluesky has a sales force and a four man technical team, with pilots provided by an auxiliary company. "But our guys install and operate the camera equipment and thoroughly check it – they know all the bells and whistles and what the buttons do," reassures James. "A lot of it is automated, however, so they don't have to spend much time fiddling with settings, although if the light does change they can change settings. But they're more camera operators than dedicated photographers. Like a lot of technology things improve to allow everything to become more automated. But planes cost thousands of pounds a day to fly so obviously it is an expensive undertaking."

Other customers of Blue Sky's include architects, planners and environmentalists, along with construction companies and media agencies. The latter connection led to one of its aerial images being used in a promotional video for the new Pink Floyd album. "We license our data and they came to us asking for a license to have it on film, which we allow. It was a very small sale but allowed us to generate a press release about it. Our images were also used a lot in the TV show *Spooks* where they wanted satellite type images, and we were also used for the same reason in the Alan Partridge film 'Alpha Papa'. We obviously provide a lot of data to Google for the Google Earth too. We get about a fair bit and service probably every type of industry."

Check out:

www.bluesky-world.com



Canary Wharf, London – a flight over the capital's new financial heartland reveals a design quality you don't see from ground level.



From the Nightsky Festival, to the flooded Somerset Levels, to the enigmatic form of the Falkirk Wheel – Britain seen from the air, night or day, for media uses.

LIGHT A LITTLE READING

Location, location, location...

The late '80s and '90s were the heyday of Environmental Portraiture, when photographers spent a great deal of time researching locations of many kinds to shoot impressive and dramatic images that lured our clients, extremely effectively I might add, into commissioning a shoot. Perhaps my language may seem different and dated, but in those days, we did enjoy a more respected status as professional photographers than perhaps we do today. The word 'commission, more akin to an artist, was accepted to justify the 'service' fees we charged for our time. Just like commercial photographers were easily able to build into our fees the additional costs of venue hire or location fees. How things have changed!

I well remember spending a good deal of time finding and negotiating access to locations for shoots. Sometimes using resources like the National Trust, English Heritage and the Landmark trust as well as consulting numerous tourist books for ideas. It was a joy to spend many a Sunday driving around, having leisurely lunches and afternoon teas in so many beautiful places and really getting to know my County. Many places were very happy to be extremely accommodating on usage fees sometimes in return for a few choice images they could use for their own purposes. Nowadays there are many places like bijou hotels that are prepared to do a contra deal for images. Indeed if you are in the classy boudoir market there are opportunities for collaborative promotional activities involving candlelit dinners and pampering spa breaks. But, be prepared to pay for the perfect locations and build it into your costs. There is much to be said for not being beholden to another business. In such cases make sure there are no copyright (*property release*) restrictions due to the nature of the venue as you may want to go back!

The challenge has always been to find places with great light and backgrounds, and if that came with a degree of privacy to negate the issues of unwanted distractions, particularly in location family and child shoots, it was indeed a bonus. My prime need was to find 'topside' to better control natural light direction. It's all well and good descending into a beautiful bluebell wood but if the light is strong with little topshade it's just a nightmare of uncontrollable specular highlights! If you can find locations that offer interior as well as exterior opportunities then this negates the issue of 'rain checks' on days when the weather is inclement.

If you chose to shoot at properties such as National Trust or English



Learn more from Martin at www.martingrahamedunn.co.uk



Heritage for example, you must remember that there may well be certain permits to work, and property release issues, which must be taken into account particularly if your images are to be seen in the public domain. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct permissions and paperwork is completed

When choosing your locations, pre-visualisation of your shoot is an essential skill. Going into an environmental session without any forethought is a recipe for disaster. Everything from the clothing and accessories to the style of subject posing must be completely thought through. Some of the best images focus on there being an incongruous relationship between the subject and their location.

It need not be all about period dress in appropriate buildings but those shoots too serve to impress. Taking the time to research exclusive locations can really help photographers stand out in their shoots and goes a long way to establish a recognisable style that will serve you well in becoming a first choice studio.

Shooting in private properties may bring challenges that you may not have thought about. Assume nothing and anticipate everything. You may not have permission to use their mains supply for instance, so be prepared to travel with the right equipment for the job. There is a wealth of battery powered lighting kit on the market and certainly with my iLux Summit 600 flash units, this is never a problem. I would always advocate training to acquire the very best in natural lighting skills as well as a mastery of off camera lightings. In simple terms of health and safety, the fact you'll have no trailing leads into extensions and aged outlets that may not be PAP tested is a bonus!

Finally, when approaching locations be mindful of your subject matter and whether it is likely to raise any objections. Many properties draw the line at nudity on-site and where it is permissible, security and privacy are big issues. I have had and indeed still do derive a great deal of pleasure in shooting on location,

particularly those that best portray the architectural heritage of our country and offer me the opportunity of creating 'painterly', and I hope, timeless images.



Martin has recently made his studio Royal Leamington Spa – located in a superb period home – available for hire. So if you're looking for a place to develop your photography, contact him on 07854 249710.



Katy by existing light with muted colours, above; facing page, using the backlight and fill naturally produced in this perfectly sized arch.



Warm sandstone and framing architecture for this picture of Hattie taken by Clive Hall during a photography workshop with Martin.

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UNDERXPOSURE

IMPORTED COLOURS

from David Bigwood freelancing in Australia

To some of us here in the Antipodes, Autumn signals the beginning of the end. It's all downhill from here. Short days leading inexorably to even shorter ones. Summer warmth and long days are disappearing. Gloomy skies are on the horizon. Cold, wet, and even colder days to come.

Feels familiar? Still, the northern hemisphere is on the way back to sunshine...

William Cullen Bryant, the nineteenth century American poet, wrote about Autumn: 'The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year'. One can almost feel him shuddering with distaste as he penned those lines.

But not all feel like Bryant. His compatriot James Whitcomb Riley exulted at the change of season when he wrote, 'O it sets my heart a clickin', like the tickin' of a clock, when the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock'. And, of course, England's John Keats welcomed the 'Seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness' with something akin to open arms.

This ambivalence to the onset of autumn is common for many reasons. Sufferers of hay fever for instance are glad to see the dampening down of their pollen producing tormentors while those who suffer the excruciating itching of chilblains live in dread as the year moves on.

For landscape photographers, it is an exciting part of the year. Summer is all very well but at times our lenses get overpowered by the omnipresent greens of high summer. What a thrill it is to sight the first flaming torch that is a poplar tree in autumn.

And, here in Australia where most trees are evergreen eucalypts it is often the introduced poplars that have colonised many areas, especially along watercourses, that provide photographers with the colour that brightens our pictures in autumn.

While poplars are certainly in the ascendancy among the deciduous trees in the mountains, they are by no means the only ones that add to the colour of the season. By the Snowy River I found some wonderful colours from a variety of trees and came across some colourful leaves through which the sun was shining and just asking to be photographed.

And, this is where the season can become alive for our lenses. While there are many, many



Above: poplars beside the Snowy River. Below: first snows of April...



attractive straight shots of colourful trees and reflections to be had, for those of us used to seeing the parts that make up the whole of the landscape, the sun, now lower in the sky than in summer, becomes a wonderful light for shots through colourful leaves, spotlight images of dried grasses, fungi, falling leaves, piles of fallen leaves and, if you have a youngster or two handy, those fallen leaves being kicked. If you have a garden with a deciduous tree as I had when I lived in Sydney, you can get these kids among the leaves shots at home.

In the mountains the last of the wildflowers are blooming among the many dead stalks of their neighbours which carpeted the alpine meadows with colour earlier in the summer and have now gone to seed. The first frosts make their presence felt in the foothills – higher up the ski resorts have had the occasional frost through summer – and by the end of April there could be fresh snow on the tops of the mountains.

Easter is the last of the peak visitor periods before the hordes descend with skis and snowboards for 'the season'.

Galleries and shows

Sad news I read about recently is that the Edmund Pearce Photography Gallery in Melbourne has closed down after just three years and over a hundred exhibitions. In the report in the *Australian Photography* magazine the directors said in a statement, "Despite the strength and diversity of the gallery's programme, it has become clearly evident that the depth and breadth of the Australian market is not sufficient to sustain a commercial space dedicated to photography".

This news shows just how far behind the United States we, and I suspect the UK, are when it comes to the sale of photographic prints. Our problem, of course, relates to the small population and its geographic spread which is an insurmountable situation in the short term and may be in the long term given the reported unsustainability of a large population by the country.

So what can we as freelancers do to maximise the return on what is generally a not inconsiderable investment that we have made in terms of cash and time? I suppose

a website would be a good idea. It can showcase our work and work for us making sales globally even when we are tucked up in bed.

Well, maybe. There are websites and websites and, as I have recently learned some do not always work as planned. An f2 reader recently contacted me with a tale of his attempts to buy one of my e-books through my website. It sounded horrific and was certainly not what I expected. I must thank the reader for telling me! I had minor problems with this site before but they were all things that I could sort out very easily. I had already decided to phase out this website but this latest fiasco really brought home the necessity to let it die a natural death and look for a new and better one.

And, the lesson is? If you have a website that you want to sell things through, make sure that you check that it is working properly rather than face the embarrassment of being told of it not working by a frustrated potential customer.

While galleries devoted to photography are closing, fortunately there are still exhibitions being mounted by our various State and National art galleries. For instance, until April 19th the Art Gallery of New South Wales will be showing a selection of the work produced by students for the Higher School Certificate Examination in Visual Arts in 2014.

The same gallery is also exhibiting hundreds of loaned photographs under the title *The Photograph and Australia* from March 21st to June 8th. This will be a major exhibition aiming to show how Australia has changed from the 1840s onwards.

I am not too sure why another photography exhibition has been called Loud! but I am grateful that photography is getting regular exposure (!) at a major art gallery. Loud! will be an exhibition of photographs of women by women which has been sourced from the Gallery's own collection.

The National Portrait Gallery in Canberra is also on the photography circuit with the launch on March 20th of an exhibition of the 44 finalists of the National Photographic Portrait Prize. These pictures can be viewed on the Gallery's website from 20 March: <http://bit.ly/1pGClop>

A record of over 2,500 entries was received. The winner of the \$25,000 prize will be announced at the launch.

This exhibition, as with earlier exhibitions of the photographs of finalists of the prize, will head off to regions in Australia. During 2015-16 it will cover Queensland with stops at Mackay, Cairns, Bundaberg and Rockhampton. These travelling exhibitions are a vital showcase for art and photography in the more remote areas of the country.



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His website/blog is at <https://davidbigwoodpublishing.wordpress.com/>



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*On the left, a contrast between the gold of a brass saxophone in tungsten light with the cool blue of LED lighting, from **Stephen Power**.*

"I was testing for leaks on my tenor saxophone, by inserting a blue LED rope light, when I saw the photographic potential. An hour later, I still hadn't checked the leaky pads..."

Canon EOS 5D III, 24-105mm L @ 105mm, 1/30th @ f5.6, ISO 1600. Lightroom 5, Noise Reduction 30. www.adareimages.com

*Right, **Charles Ooi** of Selangor, West Malaysia, took this well-arranged study of monks in Myanmar meditating photogenically. Shwe Yan Pyan Paya Temple, Shwe Nyaung. Sony A7, 16-35mm f4 ZA OSS @ 16mm, 2 seconds at f5.6, ISO 100. Well arranged? Sure – Charles is a Master of Feng Shui.*

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Returning to a favourite subject, Edinburgh stock freelance **Arch White** crossed the Forth to the less-frequented north bank for this sunrise on a chilly November morning. Canon EOS 5D MkII, 28-135mm @ 28mm, 1/160th @ f16, ISO 200.

Martin Argyroglo, whose work features in this issue, sent his shot of Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project* at the Tate Modern Gallery from 2003 – global warming warning?





Dougie Wallace (Glasweegee) sends us 'Made in Chelsea – Snorkel Boy' and comments, "just bought two MG8000 Nissin flashguns. Ceramic and quartz bulbs inside... don't heat up and go into meltdown mode..." (spot the distinctive twin flash catchlights of Dougie's street photographs). www.dougiwallace.com

Emilie Bailey, sent the scene below: "Six-piece vocal ensemble group 'The Sons of Pitches' whose press and promo photography I recently shot in Shoreditch early on a Sunday morning! It was an energetic location shoot which got the chaps lots of funny looks and comments from the usual Hoxton mix of local residents, especially as the morning went on and people crawled out from under their duvets to the surrounding markets and cafés". www.emiliebailey.com



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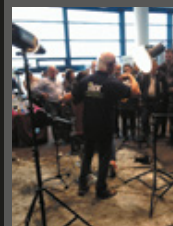
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Part of the ethos of *Cameracraft* comes from the idea that even if only a thousand copies are printed, it's free of all advertising and paid for by the subscription alone. Though articles are included which deal with equipment and cover the important news from each quarter, it's almost from a retrospective viewpoint.

Cameracraft was partly inspired by the San Francisco based *Camera Craft*, started at the beginning of the 20th century for a new generation of photo enthusiasts which blurred the boundary between the amateur and professional. Looking back at copies, we found the contents of even a single volume gave a snapshot of the technology and art of the time. Gary Friedman is our US Associate Editor on the West Coast, and our readership is evenly split between the UK and the world in general.

The latest edition of *Cameracraft*, No 10, was published at the end of January and will be available at The Photography Show.

Master Photography is our magazine produced for members of The Master Photographers Association, the only UK group for photographers recognised as a 'Trade Association'. Today, it mainly represents owners of High Street or home-based studio studios serving the public and local businesses but it is now possible to join MPA without being a full-time pro, and you can also subscribe to the magazine alone.

In the last few years, wedding photography has changed with a high proportion of weddings held at special venues or destinations, removing the local aspect and giving wedding photography a much higher value. It is now a vital part of celebrations which may cost tens of thousands and take place hundreds of miles from the couple's home ground. The same process is also changing portrait photography.

The content is of general interest to anyone intending to become a full-time photographer, or to qualify as a licensed Master Photographer and progress to the two higher levels of distinction, Associateship and Fellowship. It is included with MPA UK membership.

The **Masters of Photography** 2015 annual is a superb 80-page special edition which the MPA will have for sale at The Photography Show, along with the January/February and forthcoming March/April editions. Our website has special offers which enable you to subscribe for preferential rates.

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